

India in the New World Order

by

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PREFACE

No apology is needed for publishing this book, because, there is real danger of India being drawn into the Industrial System of the Europeans; and this book is intended as a solemn warning against the treacherous system, which tempts the unwary only to destroy them. Mahatmaji has conclusively shown that no improvement in the condition of the poverty-stricken people of India can be looked for by this country generally adopting large scale methods of production, either in the sphere of agriculture or of industries. But in spite of this, and in spite of the carnage and destruction that the Industrial System causes among the European nations at frequent intervals, we still want to persuade ourselves that the fault lies not in the system of production but in the methods of distribution, which we could somehow remedy.

This is farthest from the truth. Capitalism, Socialism, and Fascism have all been tried, and have all failed to diffuse the benefits of large scale production among the body of the people. Whereas, in the capitalistic system, the fruits of labours of men mainly go to the manufacturers and the merchants, in the other systems these are grabbed by the leaders and dictators to be used by them not for creating better and happier

conditions for men, but for destroying their lives and liberties. Thus the evils of Industrialism are inherent in the system, which no mere adjustments in the methods of distribution will ward off. At this juncture, therefore, when India is on the threshold of great political changes and we may soon become the masters of our own destinies, it is absolutely necessary that we should clearly see the evils of the industrial system; so that we are not tempted to fall into the errors of the Europeans.

Neither the declaration of President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill, nor the later pronouncements of other prominent persons give indication of the slightest change of outlook of the Europeans on the Industrial System, or of the slightest change of their attitude towards the coloured races. After the War the victor and vanquished alike of the Europeans are promised access on equal terms to trade and to the raw materials of the world; and even in a victory of the democracies the coloured races can have no hope of relief from the European systems of exploitation. Mr. Attlee believed that the principles of the declaration, such as the one that they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live, apply to all the peoples of the world; but Mr. Churchill lost no time in publicly correcting Mr. Attlee's belief, and in solemnly assuring the people of Great Britain and the people of India that they will resist to the last any attempts of the coloured peoples to acquire the right to choose the forms of governments under which they would live.

Mr. Attlee and his party "have always been conscious of the wrongs done by the white races to races with darker skins." But somehow they "have been glad to see how with the passing of years the old conception of colonies as places inhabited by inferior people, whose function was only to serve and produce wealth for the benefit of other people, has made way for juster and nobler ideas." After the forceful assertion of the time-honoured formula by Mr. Churchill, that all political progress of India must be conditional on the fulfilment of the obligations arising from their long connection with India, and their responsibilities to its many creeds and interests, Mr. Attlee and men of his way of thinking must be feeling the mortification of knowing that the white men's old conception of colonies has undergone no change for juster and nobler ideas.

Pressure of events has forced Mr. Churchill to come down somewhat hastily from his pedestal of frigid unconcern with the aspirations of Indians for their political emancipation. But the British continue to look upon the Industrial System as the bed-rock of their national well being, without which they know that the maintenance of their giant industries and their entire economic structure would become impossible. After the War they propose to rebuild the economies of nations on the basis of this system, and to this end they will strive to draw India into their fold even after she gains political independence. We must, therefore, gain conviction and strength to keep out of the system, and thereby present

to the world an example of a prosperous and contented people in a world of self-created sufferings and sorrows. Furthermore, we must not merely be content by resisting the temptations ourselves. We must even strive to persuade the British and others to considerably put back their clock of progress, if they would lay the foundation of real and lasting peace in their own distracted lands, and would create an atmosphere for an honest understanding with the coloured races.

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INTRODUCTORY

Lately the question as to how the world should be moulded after the War, so as to ensure a prolonged period of peace and prosperity for the people, has been exercising the minds of men all over the world, and prominent persons everywhere have brought this question to the forefront of world topics. To bring prosperity to the people after the War, Mr. Anthony Eden would make such relaxations of financial arrangements in the new world order as should permit revival of international trade on the widest possible basis. The great goal of humanity, as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru sees it, is the attainment of economic equality, the ending of all exploitation of nation by nation, and class by class—national freedom within the framework of an international co-operative socialist world freedom. "We may not have it within our grasp, but those with vision can see it emerging on the horizon. And even if there be delay in the realization of our goal, what does it matter if our steps march in the right direction and our eyes look steadily in front? For in the pursuit itself of a mighty purpose there is joy and happiness and a measure of achievement." Sir Mohammad Zaffrullah Khan's principles for the guidance of people in laying the foundation for a new world order are very simple indeed.

Abolition of the system of interest-bearing loans, discouragement of the hoarding of money and capital, and such other expedients, he thinks, will solve the problems confronting mankind.

But much as these and other prominent persons may seem to differ from one another in their methods, they all derive their inspiration from the fundamental conception that scientific progress and large scale production are the fountain-heads of all the wealth of the world, and that they can lay the foundations for the future happiness of the human race by making suitable adjustments in the methods of distribution of the wealth thus produced, without disturbing the machinery of production itself. They can not visualize the future of the human race except in terms of progress of science and large scale production. For them there can be no going back from the stage of progress already achieved by human ingenuity and labour. People of great industrial countries hope to avoid the chaos of the old world by the development of an international exchange in which the trading of goods and services will be the central feature. For the so-called backward countries, among which India unfortunately must be counted, the development of such an international exchange can only mean further exploitation of its resources by the clever industrial countries. But this the leaders of Indian public opinion hope to counteract by the development of great industries in India herself. Even the Indian National Congress has in recent years encouraged the

notion that the furtherance of large scale industries in the country will improve the condition of its poverty-stricken masses.

Our first consideration therefore should be critically to examine whether modern methods of production and distribution are conducive to the prosperity and happiness of man. We have to examine if in any thickly populated country industrialism has proved beneficial from considerations of general or collective good of the people. We need not quibble about the forms of government, because the great quality of modern industrialism is that the form of government most congenial to the stage of development of industry in any country will evolve of itself. We will therefore merely have a glimpse in passing of the politics and peoples of Europe, in order to form an estimate of what India would be like under an industrial system. Having done this we will examine in some detail the economic and social conditions of the people of India; and how the impact of machinery and science on agriculture and industries of the country is likely to influence the lives and fortunes of the people of this country.

The two main factors which determine the conditions of existence and degrees of opulence and civilization of any country or people are the methods of production of wealth and the methods of disposal or distribution of that wealth among the population of that country. If the methods of production of wealth be backward or deficient, then the population will remain

necessarily low in numbers and backward in wealth, arts, and civilization, but generally speaking, will not be subject to serious internal convulsions. On the other hand, if the methods of distribution of wealth among the population of any country should be defective, then the most prolific production of wealth will not produce prosperity, peace, and stability of existence for the people of that country. Thus, for peaceful human existence, proper distribution of wealth among the people is of far greater importance than its prolific production; and wherever and in whatever age there is unrest among the population, or disturbance in the relations of the men of the same country or of different countries, then the causes of unrest or disturbance may almost always be traced to defective distribution of abundant wealth.

The common conception of prosperity of a modern industrial country is that three-fourths of their adult population should remain idle or be employed in business or other non-productive occupations, as the upper and trading classes, and the remaining one-fourth should be capable of producing all the requirements of food, clothing, lodgings and luxuries, or their equivalents in exchange, for the entire population. Thanks to modern methods of large scale mechanical farming and large scale manufactures, that they have made the realization of this ideal of national prosperity possible. But whereas the work of one-fourth, and indeed of much less of the population of a well-organized country of large scale production can feed, clothe, lodge, and can provide

amenities and luxuries for the entire population, the tendency of all large scale production is to concentrate the greater portion of the produce of labour in the hands of non-workers, leaving bare means of subsistence to the producers, and turning the unemployed portion of the population into paupers.

Hypothetically it may be assumed that one man possesses all the land and other means of production in a population of say a hundred persons, and that as a result of great scientific improvements, it is possible for the owner to produce everything required for the hundred persons by simply turning on the switch of production. In such a case the remaining ninety-nine persons, for whose labour there will be no use, must either starve, or submit entirely to the will of the owner of the means of production. Or, if it be supposed that for a brief moment water, air, and light of a community became the property of a single individual, with undisputed control over the supply of these necessities of life to the rest of the community, then the existence of that community will be at the mercy of that individual, unless the community have the means of repudiating such dangerous ownership before they perish.

Mechanical farming and large scale manufactures, as these eliminate the functions of labour from agriculture and industries, have, on an ever-increasing scale, similar disastrous effects on the existence of the community, as those visualized in the previous examples. As fewer and fewer hands can produce the food required

by the community and the sizes of manufactures grow, and rationalization of industries, by which is essentially meant the elimination of working hands advances, more and more of the wealth of the community gets concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, producing dangerous and degrading conditions of dependence of the many on the few. Someone has truly said that he could not conceive a greater curse on a body of people than to be thrown upon a spot of land where the production for subsistence and food were in a great measure spontaneous, and the climate required or admitted of little care for raiment or covering. Aristotle, the greatest thinker of antiquity said thus:—

“If every tool when called upon or even of its own accord, could do the work that befits it, just as the inventions of Daidalos moved of themselves, or the tripods of Hephæstus went on their own initiative to the sacred work,—if the weaver’s shuttles were to weave of themselves—then there would be no need either of apprentices for the master-craftsmen or slaves for the Lords.”

Thus, by eliminating the need for apprentices and workers, the progress of science has brought the world to its present state of chaos, and unless we quickly appreciate the dangers that lie ahead and avoid the precipice, we shall all perish by the myriads of furies of steam-engine, oil-engine, water-turbines, and a host of mechanical and electrical contrivances, which we have let loose about us for shortening the labour of man, and setting

him free for working out his ruin.

Logically, in the greater and greater production of things useful to man, should lie the key to continuing human progress. But there is a limit to this progress, and the limit is set by the manner of utilization of the surplus food produced in any country. If the surplus food be utilized for the furtherance of peaceful arts and sciences, and for providing reasonable amenities and comforts to the largest numbers of the population, then the progress of the society will be continuing and enduring, and their civilization will attain to great eminence. Such were the civilizations of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Hindus, and the Chinese. If on the other hand the mastery of man over the forces of nature should at any time be utilized for creating habits of luxury and indolence among the people, and for promoting their brute pleasures and appetites, then howsoever great be their wealth, they will never attain real prosperity and happiness. Thus from Plato:—

“Those therefore who are unacquainted with wisdom and virtue, and who spend their time in perpetual banqueting and similar indulgences, are carried down as it appears and back again only as far as the midway point on the upward road; and between these limits they roam their life long, without ever over-stepping them, so as to look up towards or be carried to the true above; and they have never been filled with what is real, or tasted sure and unmingled pleasure; but like cattle they are always looking downwards and hanging their heads to the

ground and poking them into their dining tables, while they gaze and get fat and propagate their species; and to satiate their greedy desire for these enjoyments they kick and butt with hoofs and horns of iron, till they kill one another under the influence of ravenous appetites; because they fill with things unreal, the unreal and incontinent part of their nature."

Such indeed is the real state of the people of the present day great industrial countries. They are always poking their heads into their dining tables, get fat and propagate their species, and kick and butt with hoofs and horns of iron till they kill one another. It would be utterly wrong to say that India or any other country must always remain poor, so long as her wealth is derived from the muscles of men and animals. True wealth and real prosperity can only come from the muscles of men and animals. Those scientifically-minded persons who scoff at it show a complete misunderstanding of the real problems of life and true economy of human society. They are liable to be sceptical about the ability of the muscles of men and animals to take us out of the slough of despond, where giants of steam and electricity have failed. In all ancient mythology, forces of evil, seemingly most mighty and strong, have always been defeated by the weak but orderly forces of the good. Steam and electricity are the forces of evil, and our only hope lies in marshalling the forces of our weak muscles to drive out the demons from our midst.

In a recent broadcast the Pope said that national

economy had no other end than to secure without interruption a material condition in which the life of the citizen might fully develop. Arguing that the economic riches of a people did not properly consist in abundance of goods, but in the fact that such abundance represented and offered a material basis sufficient for the personal development of its members, the Pope said that national economy should become a guide for the efforts of statesmen and people, to enlighten them to walk spontaneously along a way which does not call for continued exaction in goods and blood, but would give the fruits of peace and general welfare.

It will not thus avail us tenaciously to adhere to the destructive methods of large scale production, and hope for our salvation by imposing a few safeguards against the system of interest-bearing loans and the hoarding of wealth by individuals, which are the direct outcome of the methods of production themselves. We need to create a collective will and purpose of the whole nation to work out our salvation by the use of our muscles. With honesty, courage, and determination to guide us on to our goal of the prosperity of the masses, and faith in the efficacy of our efforts, howsoever humble these may appear, we need never despair of success.

POLITIES AND PEOPLES OF EUROPE

(Adapted to the Text from Plato's Republic)

The polities of the nations of Europe of today, which have none of the aristocratical or high-spirited elements, and are governed by the love of gain and the love of liberty of the most intense types, may be all classified between the lower forms of oligarchy, and the worst forms of despotism, with various shades of democracy in between them. From timocracies of the chivalrous days of the crusades, European states were first transformed into oligarchies in the beginning of the industrial era. As industrialization of European countries progressed, their love of money grew in intensity; and the peoples of Europe setting down their high-spirited elements on the ground, gave themselves up entirely to the acquisition of riches and lands. Arts and industries, which in their highest perfection should have conduced most to render life happy and comfortable, degenerated into diabolical systems for the multiplication of riches. Men began to set the highest value on riches, became parsimonious and hardworking, satisfying only their necessary appetites, and refusing themselves all other expenses, and subjugating their other desires as idle. In other words they became sordid, making a profit out of everything, and given to hoarding.

The Dutch were the first European nation to take to foreign trading on an extensive scale. Soon they acquired colonies and rich possessions abroad, and in their zenith of mercantile prosperity, the accumulated wealth of Holland exceeded the total wealth of the whole of Europe. Even now the Dutch are one of the wealthiest nations of Europe, specializing in many trades and industries; and yet with all their riches, the Dutch are a proverbially parsimonious and hardworking people, satisfying only their necessary appetites and making a profit out of everything, and given to hoarding. The English, like many other nations of Europe, took to foreign trading in imitation of the Dutch, and in addition to acquiring fabulous riches within a very short time, they became masters of vast dominions in all parts of the world. On account of their national traditions of chivalry and honour, however, and on account of the presence among them of a number of great thinkers and learned men, the Englishmen's virtues, in the first phases of the acquisition of riches, did not sink in proportion to the growth of their wealth; and they maintained a high standard of national character as well as of polity, which did not sink much below the middle stage of the oligarchical, until in very recent years. The very great strides made by physical science in recent years, and the whole-sale adaptation of scientific discoveries to processes of production and industries, means of transport and communications, and methods of warfare, have revolutionized the outlook on

life of the entire Western world; and the Englishmen's national character and polity have not been able to withstand the onslaught of the disruptive forces created by the progress of science. The visions conjured up by industrial countries of their riches multiplying with the rapidity of the productivity of their machines, and the non-realization of these visions by most of them, have unhinged the minds of men and nations. Like the Maya of Hindu mythology, the phantom of gold, or the intemperate craving of the people for wealth, led them on, by the paths of trade jealousies, to the last Great War and to the still more terrible present War.

The appearance of Henry Fords and Lord Nuffields in industrial countries, from time to time, has the effect of multiplying the stinging drones among them. It has also the effect of creating dissensions among them, and of dividing each nation into two camps, one comprising the rich and the other the poor, who are always plotting against one another. The extreme love of money of the well-to-do people goes side by side with the extreme love of liberty of the poor, and the politics of Europe have drifted down to Plato's democracies and despotisms.

England, formerly a mean between timocracy and oligarchy, and now a degenerate oligarchical state, with all the evils of oligarchy and most of the faults of democracy, has been threatened with communism and Fascism on account of the intemperate craving for extravagant wealth of its people, which is publicly acknowledged to be the greatest of blessings. Those who inherit some

wealth are made luxurious and indolent both in body and mind, and so idle and effeminate that they cannot resist pleasures and encounter pain; while their seniors are indifferent to everything except making money. This is the condition of English moneyed classes; while the grievances of the working classes and of the workless millions against the rich, grow constantly both in volume and intensity. At times, the general discontent of the people displays itself in the form of quarrels among different parties, but the real quarrel is between the moneyed and moneyless classes; and as the modern methods of production accentuate the differences of wealth between the masters and the men, tension between the classes is always on the increase, although now suppressed temporarily on account of the War.

In the normal course of events, a full-fledged democracy of Plato's description should have been established in England in place of the present degenerate oligarchy. Already there is not much to distinguish between Plato's democracy and the existing polity of England. All the habits of luxury and intemperance are not only prominently present among its citizens, but are fostered by the state, by the impetus and encouragement which it gives to the acquisition of great wealth by individuals. So the primary condition for the establishment of a democracy, that some persons should be extravagantly rich, while the majority should be poor, already exists in England. Acquisition of great wealth by industrialists, financiers, and business magnates has

brought into being powerful socialist and fascist parties in the country. The principal products of industrialism in any country are the pro-socialist tendencies of the people, and these may be observed in the powerful labour unions and other socialist organizations of Great Britain. These same tendencies were visible in the great concern and uneasiness of the English working classes at the discomfiture and defeat of the socialist republic of Spain at the hands of the fascist insurgents.

Thus, we may take it that the working classes of England are socialist at heart; and if by now a socialist regime has not been established there, it is because the corrupting influences of money and office have not kept socialist leaders steadfast to their avowed creed. Socialist leaders in England are mostly drawn from amongst the comfortably established people, whose socialism has been diluted as their circumstances in life have improved. Socialism as a true creed only suits workless paupers; and as soon as the circumstances of a socialist change for the better, his ideas undergo substantial modifications. One by one, the leaders of the two socialist governments of Great Britain were turned over to the oligarchical principles by the awards of offices, peerages and other substantial inducements. And in the existing state of the polity of England, unless some strong influences unexpectedly intervene, it is likely that the two ends of the scale will continue to swing towards socialism or oligarchy according as the one or the other acquired preponderance for the moment.

It is very lucky indeed that the corrupting influences of money have so far preserved England from the anarchy of socialism. But the root cause which keeps the government and the people of England between the confusion of oligarchy, and anarchy of socialism or fascism, is the intemperate craving of the people for extravagant wealth, which is publicly acknowledged to be the greatest of blessings, and the attainment of which is considered to be the duty of every honest and good citizen. So long as this cause remains, and people are taught by the governing body that their foremost duty is to acquire extravagant wealth, extremes of wealth and poverty will continue to disturb the harmony of the state, and the poor people will continue to plot against the rich. And if at any time the leadership of the people should pass into the hands of socialist fanatics, there will be nothing to prevent the poor winning the day, killing some of the opposite party, expelling others, and admitting the remainder to an equal participation in civic rights and offices.

If this were to be the final outcome of the struggle between the oligarchical and democratical factions of the state, then there would be nothing to regret in the change which, by establishing some sort of equality among the people, and by thus removing the principal cause of dissensions in the state, would be a change for the better. But as we have learnt from Plato and from the example of the French Revolution, and as we have seen in the conditions prevailing in Russia, Italy and

Germany, before the War, the so-called freedom which is established by the suppression of oligarchy, is only a prelude to the establishment of the despotism of a dictator, and to the bitterest form of slavery of the people themselves. Freedom won by the people by violence against the rich, degenerates into violence and tyranny of the strong against the weak among the proletariat themselves, or of the stinging against the stingless drones. Democracy, the agreeable, lawless, and parti-coloured commonwealth, dealing with all alike on a footing of equality, whether they be really equal or not, never lasts for very long. The insatiable craving for freedom and disregard for all else soon pave the way for despotism. Indeed the excess of anything seldom fails to provoke a violent reaction to the opposite extreme. So, excessive freedom soon passes into excessive slavery, in the case of states as well as of individuals; and the most intense freedom lays the foundation for the bitterest slavery.

Some people have set up the communist state of Russia as their model for future India, both in the spheres of civil government and economic reconstruction of the country. So, it would be pertinent to have a glimpse of the Russia of today. The economy of Soviet Russia may be summed up in the rapid industrialization of the country and socialization of the village. Industrialism is the origin and life of socialism. All the theories of Karl Marx rest on the fundamental need of emancipating the industrial

workers from the exploitation of masters of industry. Capitalism derives its sustenance from the appropriation of more and more of the labour time of industrial workers to its advantage, and Marxism aims at restoring this labour time to the workers themselves, by eliminating capitalism from the field of industry, and creating a classless society of workers, all getting equal rewards from the fruits of their joint labours. So, it is to industrialism that socialism must look for the creation of that blissful classless state of society of which Marx and Lenin dreamt; and it was therefore the first concern of communist Russia to push forward the industrialization of Russia on a colossal scale.

"To suppose that all who toil are equally gifted for this task of building socialism, would be the emptiest phrase or illusion of the antidiluvian, pre-Marxian socialist; because this ability does not create itself but grows historically, and grows only out of LARGE CAPITALISTIC PRODUCTION. Only the proletariat on its march from capitalism to socialism possesses this ability."

The above words of Lenin furnish the clue to the fundamental policy of Russian socialists, of colossal industrialization of their country. Socialization of the villages, and collectivization of agriculture followed as a corollary. Individualistic economy of the agricultural population was incompatible with the collectivistic economy of the state; and as the power of the state was in the hands of the proletariat, they over-ran the

countryside and succeeded in imposing their policy on the agricultural population. In the socialistic as also in the capitalistic economy, large scale production by means of machinery connotes to them the only condition of efficiency. Agricultural operations of individuals on small strips of land, being highly wasteful and inefficient, are, wherever practicable, abandoned by them in favour of large scale mechanical farming. In capitalist countries, they cannot indulge in violent and wholesale despoilation of the people of their lands, even for increasing agricultural efficiency, as it would cut at the very root of capitalistic society. So they adopt the insidious methods known only to capitalists, of dispossessing small landholders, for the sake of satisfying their greed and their cravings for efficiency by means of mechanical farming. But no such considerations prevented the socialists of Russia from violating the sanctity of the possessions of inefficient rural populations; and at one stroke, they drove away from their ancestral homes and hearths millions of peaceful rural population—men, women, and children, young and old—as so many castaways, either to fall in with the communal arrangements, or to perish by starvation and severity of the elements.

Thus the victory of the proletariat in Russia over capitalism was celebrated with mass despoilation by them of the peasantry of their own country; and the blissful classless state of society was inaugurated by them by the violation, robbery, and murder, of the weaker

and less organized, though much more important class of workers than themselves. Such was the state of vandalism and anarchy in Russia, when collectivization of agriculture was in its initial stages, as to compel Stalin himself to publish a letter entitled "Dizziness from Success", which sought to restore sanity among the maddened proletarians. Conditions in Spain which led up to the civil war, were not so bad as in Russia, because socialistic principles and power had not acquired complete ascendancy in the country before the crash came. But, as appeared from a letter contributed to the London Times at the time of the Spanish Civil War, by a Spanish gentleman residing in London, life of the rural population had been rendered altogether intolerable by the cut-throat republicans, the meanest of whom aspired to greater influence and authority in the countryside than the most respected leaders of the rural population.

Of course, the figures of production of industry—of electrical power, mineral oil, coal, and iron, and chemical fertilizers and agricultural produce, as also of the construction of railways, automobiles, ships, and aeroplanes, constitute a very great achievement for the organizing powers of the Russian socialists. On the social and cultural sides also, as understood by them their achievements have not been inconsiderable. There has been general and very great increase in the literacy of the people. Technical training to millions of peasants and to hundreds of thousands of industrial workers has

been imparted; and school teachers, doctors, and nurses have been manufactured by them in legions.

But these only denote a condition of plenty or even of superabundance, which already exists in many capitalistic countries, the economy of which has failed to diffuse general prosperity among the masses. The great plea for socialistic economy is that by bringing into the service of man the great forces of Nature which science has harnessed, it aims at creating general conditions of prosperity for the masses; and by doing away with the waste and very large numbers of unproductive occupations of the capitalistic system of production, it aims at solving the problems of unemployment and poverty of the working classes.

We have already seen that socialism has ruthlessly trampled under foot the most important section of the working classes themselves over which it acquired ascendancy by reason of its superior force and organization. It has also cast aside the pretence of equality of wages for all, and professes to reward skill, initiative, and ability by payment of wages according to results, and by the encouragement and promotion of suitable workers without regard to party membership. It has also introduced capitalistic systems of planning of industry, and of accounting of profits and losses on individual enterprises. There is nothing to find fault with the efficient and methodical management of industry by the state. This is as it should be. But at the same time, there need be no false professions of the collectivistic

ideal of socialism. The events in Russia have created a state capitalism though on a restricted scale, out of the professedly socialistic state; and the privileged members of the communist party take whatever they can lay hold on, consistent with their personal safety. A fresh foundation for economic and social inequality, which socialism professed to destroy, has been firmly laid, and whatever the outcome of the War in which Russia is engaged at present, it is certain that the country will soon cast off the thin veneer of socialism, to take her rightful place among the capitalistic nations of the world.

As has been indicated before, capitalism, socialism, and Fascism have their common paternity in modern industrialism; and they have many common features. All the three pay great homage to their aged parent, Industrialism, whom they look up to for furnishing them with plentiful means of subsistence and luxuries. Capitalism is the oldest and the most favoured child of Industrialism, on whom the parent lavishes the choicest of gifts with a prodigal hand. It builds palaces, parks, and art galleries for the favourite child, and fills them with the choicest viands, fruits, flowers, trinkets, and works of art from all parts of the world. But in this system, whereas the favourite child receives all the blessings from the parent, the workers—hewers of wood and drawers of water—are always kept on a famine basis, by the parsimony of the favourite child. The workers or the servants at first remonstrate with their master at

their niggardly treatment, they then threaten to cease serving him, and at last when none of these measures avail them, they break into open revolt against the master, under the leadership of Socialism, the second child of Industrialism, who harbours great grudge against Capitalism. The ease-loving, luxurious, and effeminate Capitalism soon falls before the impetuosity of the well-disciplined forces of the lean, but strong and virile Socialism. The parent, though not well pleased with the success of his rebellious child, is forced to acquiesce in his victory; and the new master and men suddenly getting possession of great riches, give themselves up to reckless pleasures and unrestrained feasting, and revelry. This orgy of feasting and dancing continues for some time, until the stronger and more wary among them, taking advantage of the drunkenness of the crowd, usurp control of affairs and overawe the men into submission. The tussle for supreme power among the newly formed leaders, after passing through many phases of success and failures for the various aspirants, ends in one man's gaining complete mastery of the situation; and he becomes the chief Dictator over the whole population.

Capitalism, Socialism and Fascism enter into an internecine and interminable war among themselves for the possession of power and wealth of their common parent; making different alliances at different times, and meeting with varying degrees of success. The general destruction that their wars cause among them,

prompts them to compose their differences, the eldest and still the richest brother making desperate efforts for the three of them to come to a common understanding. But the more youthful and ambitious Socialism and Fascism, flushed with their initial successes, pitch their claims extravagantly high; and a common understanding can never be reached. Moreover, the interminable wars among his children greatly impair the wealth-producing powers of old Industrialism; and whatever is produced is quickly consumed by its great progeny, born through Capitalism, Socialism, and Fascism. Industrialism in its initial stages of prosperity, principally relied on cheating its clients through its favourite child Capitalism. Now many of its old clients have come into the fold of Industrialism itself, through their allegiance to one or the other of its warring children. And the remaining ones too, partly on account of their being on guard against the machinations of the tribe of Industrialism, and partly on account of interminable wars among the industrialists themselves, manage to escape being cheated. Off and on the non-industrialists are subjected to predatory incursions by the young progeny of Industrialism, who carry away rich booty during those raids. But howsoever large be the booty, it can never equal the constant stream of wealth which flowed to the quiet cheating of Capitalism. Thus, as it grows old, Industrialism steadily loses its efficacy as a wealth-creating mechanism, and ultimately dies broken-hearted and utterly forsaken by its very children.

We have seen that Capitalism, Socialism, and Fascism are the children of the same parent; so our changing the allegiance from one to the other cannot better our condition, especially as the one we are already serving under, has the advantage of steady moderation and good breeding over the more impetuous children of Industrialism. So our aim should be to cast off Industrialism. But if we must continue to be exploited by modern Industrialism, then the yoke of Capitalism with its suavity of manners, is much easier to carry than will be the burden of ill-bred, wild, and drunken Socialism, or of still worse Despotism. It will be immaterial whether foreign or Indian 'socialists or fascists exercise their brutal sway and tyranny over us; the pain and torture will be just the same. What will really benefit, not only the poverty-stricken masses of India but the common people of the whole world is for them to shake off the yoke of Capitalism by discarding modern Industrialism, in its virulent forms; and generally to revert to the old slow methods of production which, by their unobtrusive efficacy, fed with plenty and clothed with sufficiency the entire populations of the world, and kept the trade channels of the world full to overflowing with the choicest goods of comforts and luxuries.

AGRICULTURE—I

There never were two opinions about the paramount importance of agriculture in the economy of Indian life or indeed of human life. Two-thirds of the population of India get their living directly by cultivation; and the remaining one-third are dependent on agriculture for their subsistence in one way or the other. Fully three-fourths of the population live in the half million villages of India. In the words of Lord Linlithgow "India's wealth, in an overwhelming degree, is in her agriculture, and that upon the fields of her cultivators is founded the whole structure of India's economy. The peasant, now as ever, is the chief source and creator of both her wealth and greatness, and of him it may with truth be said that he is India."

✓ Mahatmaji's political campaigns, primarily aimed at improving the condition of the poverty-stricken villagers, by obtaining political power and using that power for preventing the exploitation of the villagers by the rent collecting absentee landlords and foreign mercantile and financial systems. And now his entire energies are devoted to the task of economic and social improvement of the rural population. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, both in his writings and speeches, has laid the greatest stress on the problem of discovering ways and

means of mitigating the poverty of the villagers; and even the President of the Indian Science Congress held at Hyderabad sometime ago, took up 'The Indian Villager' as the subject of his presidential address. The activities of the Government in connection with the 'rural uplift' work, which have been greatly extended and intensified in recent years, have eclipsed everything else in the village and town life of India by their obtrusive importance; so that the villager cannot now complain of want of widespread interest in his affairs, although he may for a long time yet keenly feel the want of bread in his larder.

But, howsoever much and widely the importance of agriculture to the economy of India may be recognised, this cannot atone for the non-realization by some of the industrial nations, notably the British, with whom we are so intimately connected, of the importance of agriculture to the economies of their own countries. It is the lack of appreciation by industrial nations of the absolute paramountcy of agriculture over all other forms of useful human occupations, that has brought about the confusion of separate agricultural and industrial economies, and has created a keen diversity of interests between agricultural and industrial countries, which is proving such a hindrance to the formation of friendly relations between these two sets of peoples. Unless, therefore, it comes to be generally realized by industrial nations that, whatever be the extent of their mastery over the forces of Nature, and whatever their

powers of production, whether in the sphere of agriculture or of manufactures, the presence of less than half agricultural population in any large country must inevitably prove disastrous to the true economy and welfare of that country, it will never be possible to reconcile the conflicting claims and ambitions of agriculturists and industrialists.

✓ The essence of agricultural economy is self-sufficiency, whereas industrial economy, for its very existence, must strive to break through the barriers of self-sufficiency of the agriculturists. It will only be when industrial economy fails in its aggressive tendencies towards its agricultural neighbours, and is forced to strive to attain self-sufficiency in the matter of its essential requirements of agricultural products that proper ground will be prepared for a unification of the two economies into a state of universal harmony and concord, in which different peoples will live as friends and neighbours; none feeling the necessity of forcing their goods on others for the sake of self-preservation alone, as most industrial nations have to do now.

The first necessity of human life is food, and since the dawn of the world, all human effort and ingenuity have been primarily and principally directed to the invention and improvements of methods for producing human food. India has been an agricultural and thickly populated country since prehistoric times; so we may assume that it was one of the first countries in which the art of cultivation was invented and perfected. As

improvements in the methods of cultivation, or increase in the means of human subsistence, directly tend to the increase of population, and to improvements of learning, arts, and civilization, it is no wonder that India was, by all accounts, a very populous and highly civilized country, full of learning, arts and riches of every kind, long before Europeans emerged from their primitive state of existence. Human beings, like all other species of animals multiply the quickest where means of subsistence are the most abundant. And as the situation and condition of India, with a great natural barrier of high mountains on its land frontiers, and a vast ocean on the sea-side, and with good soil, climate, and abundant water supplies from rivers and rains, were highly favourable for the peaceful development of cultivation; India or the greater part of it, has always been very thickly populated. With the increase of population and further improvements in cultivation, arts, and civilization, as fewer and fewer persons produced food sufficient for all, more and more persons were set free for providing clothing, lodgings, furniture, and other wants and ornaments of mankind, and for the contemplation of abstract subjects. It was thus that India being the first home of cultivation, was the first cradle of arts, riches, and learning, in the world. Almost a continuous stream of outsiders flowed into India at all periods of history, only to further add to her wealth, and prosperity. It was only with the arrival of Europeans that her wealth and splendour began to languish.

as agriculture was the primary occupation of man, so it remains to this day the only original source of wealth and the fountain-head of all human activities. The mystic seeks union with God, the scholar contemplates the hidden philosophy of life, the scientist brings to light mysteries of nature, the artist paints the beautiful land-scape, the poet sings praises of the Deity, the alchemist is lost in the pursuit of turning base metals into gold, and the votary of Mammon brings out gems and precious metals from the bowels of the earth and pearls from the depths of the ocean, only because some tiller of the soil, is somewhere producing food for him. Suspend agricultural operations of the world only for one season, and all other activities on the face of the earth will come to a stand-still.

One seed thrown into earth, soil and climate suiting, will bring out twenty or more seeds at the end of a few months. One man's labour, unaided by machinery, except the simple plough and a few tools, will feed, clothe, and decently lodge nine or ten persons. And yet the pampered people of modern Europe, consider agriculture a contemptible occupation, fit only for the poor and ignorant people of the East, unless it can be advantageously pursued with the help of machinery in new countries and colonies for the production of cheap food-stuffs and raw materials. They assign agriculture, the first source of all the revenue and wealth of the world, as the cause of poverty of India and of other eastern countries; and as far as possible employ themselves in

manufactures, trade and other unproductive occupations.

Adam Smith, discussing different employments of capital writes thus about the employment of capital in agriculture:—

“No equal capital puts into motion a greater quantity of productive labour than that of the farmer. Not only his labouring servants but his labouring cattle are productive labourers. In agriculture, too, Nature labours along with man; and though her labour costs no expense, its produce has its value, as well as that of the most expensive workmen. The most important operations of agriculture seem intended, not so much to increase, though they do that too, as to direct, the fertility of Nature towards the production of plants most profitable to man. A field over-grown with briars and brambles may frequently produce as great a quantity of vegetables as the best cultivated vineyard or cornfield. Planting and tillage frequently regulate more than they animate the active fertility of Nature; and after all their labour, a great part of the work always remains to be done by her. The labourers and labouring cattle, therefore, employed in agriculture, not only occasion, like the workmen in manufactures, the reproduction of a value equal to their own consumption, or to the capital which employs them, together with its owners profits, but of a much greater value. Over and above the capital of the farmer and all its profits, they regularly occasion the reproduction of the rent of the landlord. This rent

may be considered as the produce of those powers of Nature, the use of which the landlord lends to the farmer. It is greater or smaller according to the supposed natural or improved fertility of the land. It is the work of Nature which remains, after deducting or compensating everything which can be regarded as the work of man. It is seldom less than a fourth, and frequently more than a third, of the whole produce. No equal quantity of productive labour, employed in manufactures, can ever occasion so great reproduction. In them Nature does nothing, man does all; and the reproduction must always be in proportion to the strength of the agents that occasion it. The capital employed in agriculture, therefore, not only puts into motion a greater quantity of productive labour than any equal capital employed in manufactures, but in proportion to the quantity of productive labour which it employs, it adds much greater value to the annual produce of the land and labour of the country, to the real wealth and revenue of its inhabitants. Of all the ways in which capital can be employed, it is, by far the most advantageous to society."

This appreciation of agriculture is from the pen of the greatest economist of a predominantly manufacturing and trading country, accustomed to consider manufactures, trade and all other occupations, down to the trade of a brewer, as productive occupations. If, therefore, we assess agriculture at its true worth, and regard the annual produce of the soil as the only acquisition to

the wealth of any country—all other occupations being treated as the products or handmaids of agricultural prosperity—then in considering the economy of any country, the question of comparing the relative advantages of capital employed in agriculture, and capitals employed in manufactures and trade cannot arise. All the different capitals employed in manufactures, trade, mines, fisheries, and forests, and indeed in any occupation whatever, must either consist of the produce of the soil in the shape of provisions and raw materials, or must have been, in the first instance, produced with the produce of the soil. (The machinery of manufacturers, the materials and instruments of trade of merchants and artisans, the tools of miners, fishermen, and foresters, and the railways and ships that carry the merchandise to all parts of the world, could never be made, and the workers engaged in various occupations could not be maintained, without the raw materials and provisions produced from the soil.

Thus the prime occupation of man being agriculture, whosoever helps to raise two blades of grass or two ears of corn where one grew before, is a greater worker than the most skilful manufacturer or the most learned scholar. The services of the spinner, the weaver, the soldier, and the statesman may be very useful indeed; but their's are by no means productive occupations, while those of persons connected with agricultural work, from the highest to the lowest, are productive occupations. / The good landlord, by carrying out

improvements on land, by building farm houses, drains, enclosures, wells and tanks, enables cultivators to raise greater produce, with a certain amount of labour and capital, than they could otherwise have done; and for this reason those landlords who interest themselves in the improvements of land are productive workers. The landlords carry out improvements of land to obtain higher rents; but even so, their contributions and investments of capital and stock greatly add to the annual wealth of the country, and good landlords, therefore, deserve well of their countrymen.

But the greatest and the original productive workers, are the cultivators themselves, who raise the produce from the soil by laying out all their labour and capital in agricultural occupations. Even if landlords did not carry out improvements on land, the cultivators, if they had the seed and ploughing instruments and cattle, would produce something by their unassisted labour greatly in excess of what would be sufficient for the subsistence of their families themselves and dependents. They are the people, therefore, who by their labour, sustain this world of human beings; and so, their well-being should be the greatest concern of all. That part of the produce of the soil which is to maintain them and their agricultural stock, should be sacred to cultivation; which neither the landlord nor the government, by their rents and taxes may violate. If they do so, they necessarily reduce the produce of land and wealth of the country. If in any country, cultivators

and their agricultural cattle are not properly cared for, and the peasantry remain in want of sufficient seeds and manures for the proper cultivation of lands, the quality and quantity of the produce will naturally deteriorate, to the great detriment of the revenue and wealth of the country. The peasantry of any country are the great pillars of national existence, who support the whole burden of society; so any neglect or weakening of them must inevitably lead to the impoverishment and ruin of that country.

Manufactures and occupations which abridge and facilitate agricultural labour, by means of improvements of agricultural machinery and tools, are also productive occupations; but manufacture of machinery and appliances for large scale mechanical farming may be treated as productive occupations in a restricted sense and in those localities only where improved machinery and labour-saving mechanical devices do not militate against the bread-giving employments of the people.

Modern advocates of improvement of agriculture, without giving due regard to the first essential condition of the improvement of the condition of the peasantry, suppose all improvement to consist in replacing the common plough with the steam tractor, and the scythe with the mechanical reaper. These changes may constitute real improvements of agriculture where there is shortage of labour, and agricultural farming is done like any other business, for commercial purposes of export of the produce of the soil, in exchange for gold or

articles of convenience and luxury. In other words, farming by mechanical means is only an improvement on farming by means of human labour, where labour is scarce, and the produce of farming is primarily raised to sell at competitive prices, in exchange for articles manufactured by mechanical means. In such situations, as the export of food and other produce of the soil cannot cause starvation to the population of the country of export, cultivation of land loses the sanctity of a beneficent occupation, and comes within the category of all other common occupations, carried on for trade and profit, and deserving of no special treatment from the government or the society.

But the agriculture of ancient and populous countries cannot be treated in the same manner. Where large populations have to be fed from the produce of the soil within the country of production, and an acre or so is all that comes to the share of every inhabitant of the country, real improvements of agriculture do not consist in eliminating human labour from agricultural operations, but in the improved culture of land, so as to produce heavier crops per acre of cultivated land.

Better manuring and cultivation, more scientific rotation of crops, better care of the cultivators and agricultural stock, and above all, preservation of the produce of the soil within the country of production itself, all constitute real improvements of agriculture.

Even in highly progressive manufacturing countries, where alternative occupations for people driven out of

agriculture are comparatively easy to find, large scale agriculture has the inevitable effect of altering the circumstances of lower ranks of the people in almost every respect, for the worse. From little occupiers of land they are reduced to the state of day labourers and hirelings, and at the same time their subsistence in that state becomes more difficult to procure. The land which under the system of small scale farming is overspread with small tenants and farmers, is always peopled in proportion to its produce. But under the improved system of large scale cultivation, the largest possible produce is obtained at the least possible expense; and useless hands being with this view removed, the population is reduced not to what the land will maintain, but what it will employ.

/// In India or any similarly thickly populated country, therefore, only the improvements of the tools of a farm labourer, or such appliances as facilitate irrigation of small plots of land, or improvements in the methods of lifting water from wells, which would tend to an increase in the produce of the soil, without having the pernicious tendency to drive away rural populations into large towns, would be of real economic value; so leaders of public opinion should encourage these improvements rather than preach doctrines of industrialism and socialism in imitation of the industrial countries. //

AGRICULTURE—II

As far as merely the technical aspect of agriculture goes, Indians are not deficient in it. In fact the testimony of all noted agriculturists and scientists, who have taken any pains to observe the conditions and methods of farming in India, conclusively show that the art of cultivation is highly perfected in this country. The often quoted testimony, on the excellence of the methods of farming in India, of Dr. Voelcker, who was consulting Chemist to the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and was deputed to visit India in 1889, to make enquiries on Indian agriculture, with a view to suggesting improvements, will stand repetition here:—

‘On one point there can be no question, viz., that the ideas generally entertained in England, and often given expression to even in India, that Indian agriculture is, as a whole primitive and backward, and that little has been done to try to remedy it, are altogether erroneous.

‘At his best the Indian Ryot, or cultivator, is quite as good as, and in some respects the superior of, the average British farmer; whilst at his worst it can only be said that this stage is brought about largely by an absence of facilities for improvements which is probably unequalled in any other country, and that the Ryot will

struggle on patiently and uncomplainingly in the face of difficulties in a way that no one else would.

'Nor need our British farmers be surprised at what I say, for it must be remembered that the natives of India were cultivators of wheat centuries before we in England were. It is not likely, therefore, that their practice should be capable of much improvement. What does however, prevent them from growing large crops is the limited facilities to which they have access, such as the supply of water and manure. But, to take the ordinary acts of husbandry, nowhere would one find better instance of keeping land scrupulously clean from weeds, of ingenuity in device of water-raising appliances, of knowledge of soils and their capabilities, as well as the exact time to sow and to reap, as one would in Indian agriculture; and this not at its best alone, but at its ordinary level. It is wonderful, too, how much is known of rotation, the system of mixed crops and fallowing. Certain it is that, I, at least, have never seen a more perfect picture of careful cultivation combined with hard labour, perseverance, and fertility of resource, than I have seen in many of the halting places in my tour.'

Lord Linlithgow also had a kind word to say about the Indian cultivator. 'I ought to warn those of my readers, who may be without knowledge of Oriental agriculture, against the cardinal error of regarding the traditional system of agriculture as basically unsound. Nothing could be further from the truth. The more the European learns about agriculture in India, the

greater grows his respect for the system of cultivation practised by the peasant’

As early as 1889, it was not the deficiency of the Indian agriculturist in the art of cultivation, but extreme lack of facilities for improvements, which was responsible for the low state of Indian agriculture. And after a lapse of more than fifty years, during which period extensive researches in agriculture under British scientists have been going in India, it did not become even a Royal Commission on Agriculture to disparagingly speak of the ‘primitive methods of the Indian cultivator’. It is not the primitive methods of the cultivator but the rack-renting of the landlord, and excessive taxation of the Government, which do not respect the sanctity and inviolability of the cultivator’s means of subsistence and his agricultural stock, and above all, the British Government’s determined policy of forcibly bringing into unequal competition the Indian agricultural produce of human labour with their own machine-made goods, and their policy of maintaining unfair ratios of exchange, that have kept the agriculture of the country so low, and have caused such a severe poverty in the country as was unknown in any previous age. Truly, the Indian Ryots have been struggling on patiently, uncomplainingly and heroically, in the face of difficulties, as the peasants of no other country could have done; until now, the combined demands of the landlord and the Government, of their rents and taxes, and the depredations of foreign trade and ratios of exchange,

have rendered peaceful cultivation for them almost impossible.

The rent which should properly belong to the landlord, even assuming that the principle of land rent is justified, is only the net produce which remains after paying, in the completest manner, all the reasonable expenses of the cultivator and his family, and all other expenses which must be laid out in order to raise the crops. Similarly, the Government of the country could reasonably claim only a certain portion of the landlord's rent as the Government tax. But all these elementary requirements of justice, and even of lasting self-interest, have been persistently ignored by the landlord and the Government in exploiting the Indian cultivator.

Agriculture, being the principal industry of India and the mainstay of the people, must likewise remain, in one form or other, a principal source of revenue to the Government. Almost eighty percent of the population depend on agriculture and its immediately allied industries for their livelihood, and nearly half the revenues of the provincial Governments are directly derived from land tax or land revenue, as it is called in India. It is not my purpose here to enter into the history or detailed discussion of the land revenue administration of the country. I will only mention that this method of taxation, although perhaps the only institution of its kind in the world at the present day, and one which is open to some very serious objections under

present day conditions, has still the sanction of antiquity behind it; and for this reason alone, if not misused by the Government, may not be utterly condemned. Since the oldest times, the rulers of India have claimed some share in the produce of land; and her present British rulers, have retained this old and familiar method of taxing the people. But whereas the old rulers of India, being mindful of their own real interests, which consisted in the agricultural prosperity of the country, never claimed more than a certain portion of the produce as their share, her British rulers, while retaining the old method of taxing the people, have violated the essence of it; and from the very beginning of their rule, with short intermissions, have gone on raising their share in the produce of land, either directly by raising the amount of tax, or indirectly by manipulating the value of the rupee, so much so that their claim of land revenue, in the severe depression of 1929-31, in many cases, amounted to the entire produce of land, or even more than the entire produce.

One very serious defect, or rather a ruinous feature of this system, in the present day conditions of keen competition and struggle for existence, when no subsidiary occupations are available to small landlords to supplement their agricultural incomes, apart from the question of legitimate share of the Government in the produce of land, is, that the rich and the indigent are all taxed in proportion to the extent of their holdings; even the poor owner or cultivator of the smallest plot

of land, and living in the most miserable poverty, not being immune from the land tax. In all other forms of taxation of the people, even in India, in manufactures and trade, certain low incomes, which are considered barely sufficient to give some sort of subsistence to an ordinary sized family, are exempt from taxation; and the richer people are taxed, according to a graded scale, in proportion to their incomes. In this manner, the first principle of taxation, that incomes arising from rents, and profits from capital investments, and incomes from high wages should only be taxed, is fulfilled; and only those people are taxed who can afford to pay taxes without depriving themselves and their families and dependents of the elementary necessities of life. The deficiency arising from exemptions of the poor is made good by heavier taxation of the rich; so that the Government do not suffer loss of revenue.

But under the land revenue system of India, a poor cultivator is often compelled to mortgage his land, pledge the future produce of the soil, or sell his whole share in the ownership of a plough cattle, the chief instrument of his trade, just to pay the Government demand on his two or three acres. Sometime back the *Statesman*, eulogizing the sense of honour felt by the Punjab peasant, published a pathetic story of a person who owed seven rupees to the Government on account of land revenue. The man was unable to pay the amount, and could not borrow from the local Sahukar. But he insisted on honouring the debt by

parting with a small ornament his child was wearing. The sense of honour of the man was praiseworthy indeed, but equally praiseworthy is the sense of honour of the Government which subsists on distress money of the people, and remains unmoved by such tales of woe of the peasantry, which have become a common feature of the life of the peasant, since the severe depression in agricultural prices began. Thus, under this system, not only the food of the poor is taxed, contrary to all canons of taxation, but the very means of producing that food are liable to be taken away, and are often taken away from indigent people, to pay the Government tax.

Another drawback of this system of taxation is that during land settlement operations particularly, and at other times generally, the revenue officials who measure the fields and assess the land revenue, wield unduly large authority to pry into the affairs of the people and to harass them. The petty revenue officials are generally not only able to extract from the poor people a substantial portion of their meagre subsistence, but are also often the cause of ruinous quarrels and litigation among the villagers. There is a saying in India that 'God above, and Patwari (the village revenue official) below, are the only two beings to be feared,' and there is much truth in this saying so far as it pertains to the revenue official.

Agriculture being at the present day, thanks to the achievement of the British rule of India during the

last two centuries, practically the only industry of the people, the produce of agriculture must be taxed to meet legitimate expenses of administration of the country. But, a system of taxation which has a tendency to lower the produce of the soil and to suppress poor agricultural workers, and lets loose parasites and disruptive agents among the rural population, should surely be capable of being so altered as to bring in the requisite amount of revenue to the Government, and at the same time relieve poor owners and cultivators of such small plots of land, as can barely produce subsistence for themselves and their families, of the burdens of taxation and harassments of the revenue officials. The land revenue administration of India by heavily taxing the smallest plots of land, greatly discourages agricultural industry, the only productive industry of the country, and greatly keeps down the wealth and revenues of the people. —It should as much be the interest of the Government, as it is of the people, that this cause of deterioration of wealth and revenue of the country be removed by so altering the system of land taxation as to exempt inferior tenures from all taxes.

Of course, there may be many alternatives possible to the existing land revenue system of India, which will relieve poor agriculturists of the burden of land tax without depriving the Government of the requisite amount of revenue. The system of taxing only that portion of the produce of the soil which goes to the market for sale, as I am told, is prevalent in Iraq, and

possibly in some other countries also, will be an extremely suitable alternative to the existing land revenue system of India. It will admirably fulfil the twofold requirement of relieving poor people of the crushing land tax and harassments of the revenue officials, and will, at the same time, furnish ample revenues to the Government. But whatever the alternative method of taxation to be adopted, this much is certain that the existing land revenue system of India, howsoever well it may have fitted in with the old economy of Indian life, has no place in the destructive organization of the present-day-commercial-world, which has the effect of sucking dry the remotest corners of the world by means of its engines of large scale production, distribution and finance.

The two fundamental conditions which contributed to the successful working of the land revenue system of India for ages were, that no previous Government claimed more than a certain portion of the produce of the soil as their tax, and by far the greater portion of the land tax went back to the people to support life and industry of the country itself. Now the fixed money payments on account of the land tax instead of payments in kind, as a rule, fail to take account of fluctuations in the prices of commodities; and as the tendency of the assessing officers is always to pitch the scale of taxation as high as possible, any sudden fall in the prices of commodities has the effect of ruining the peasantry and agriculture of the country,

as the experience of the depression between the years 1930 and 1940 has so clearly demonstrated. The second fundamental condition for the successful working of the land revenue system, whereby the produce of the land tax went to support life and industry of the country, and by maintaining a correct balance between agriculture and industry, kept both of them flourishing, is completely absent now. So, in the absence of these two fundamental requisites for the successful working of the land revenue system, its continuance is ruining agriculture, and is causing widespread poverty and discontent.

True wisdom, therefore, requires that both to restore the prosperity of the people, and to ensure stability of the Government, necessary changes in the system of taxing the produce of the soil be made forthwith. If the suggested method of taxing only that portion of the produce of the soil which goes to the market for sale is adopted, then the cultivator will sell only such portion of the produce of his land as he can spare from his essential requirements. Now he has per force to part with a considerable portion of his produce to pay up the land revenue demand, or to liquidate some of his debts, which more often than not he has originally contracted to meet the revenue demand. Under the present system the incidence of taxation falls on the poor cultivator who cannot bear the burden; whereas, under the proposed system, the outside consumers of the produce of land will pay the tax in the slightly increased price

of the produce, without feeling the effect of it. Even now, almost all the Indian towns permit entry of the produce of the soil within the town limits on payment of heavy octroi duties and terminal taxes, sometimes amounting to as much as twenty per cent. A little additional import duty into the towns, will not affect the townspeople, but the relief from the land revenue demand will be the greatest of blessings to the villagers.

As has been remarked, the defective system of taxation, by which the rich and the poor are taxed alike, and the revenue and wealth of the inhabitants are kept low, is not the only disability of the poor Indian cultivator. The rack-renting, like the Government tax, to which agriculturists are subjected, is unbearable to the most thrifty and frugal race of human beings on earth. In Northern India, on the zemindari lands cultivated by tenants, the expenses of raising a crop, including the upkeep of bullocks and cost of seeds and manures, are all borne entirely by the tenants or cultivators. The landlords, without rendering any material or social service to the cultivators, simply take away half the gross produce from the canal-irrigated areas and areas solely dependent on rains for irrigation, and one-third of the gross produce from areas irrigated by means of wells, as their share of the produce. The absentee landlordism, which is the product of the peace and security of private property ensured by the British rule, has led to this wholesale despoilation of the masses by parasitical landlords, which could not have happened

in any previous age. The expenses of bringing a crop to maturity, in Northern India, (which would be about the same in other parts of the country) including the upkeep of plough cattle and cost of seeds and manures, but not taking into account the wages of the cultivator and his family, who also generally help him in the lighter agricultural tasks, amount to about thirty per cent of the gross produce of and, on the canal irrigated areas, and to about forty-five per cent on areas irrigated from wells, in good years of crops. Ten to twelve per cent of the gross produce goes to pay the land revenue of which the tenant pays half; and thus, after paying the landlords share of the produce, not more than ten or twelve per cent of the gross produce, often much less, but generally not more, is left to the cultivator for the subsistence and upkeep of himself and his family. If, as previously suggested, the cultivator were relieved of the land revenue demand, and an equal or even somewhat larger amount of revenue were collected by the Government by taxing the produce of the soil, then the income of the cultivator would at once be doubled. The amount of land revenue demand, appears insignificant enough when compared to the value of the total produce of land; but measured in terms of the cultivator's share of income from land, it represents an amount equal to his entire income and an amount which if added to his income will at once change his condition from stark poverty to one of happy affluence.

The price of the produce of a fair sized holding of

six acres, taking the average of canal and well irrigated areas, from two crops, in normal good years, at the present rates is about Rs. 500 or £ 40, which gives about Rs. 60 or £ 4|10 as the average yearly, or less than 3d. average daily earnings of the cultivator and his family. Northern India, with its rapidly expanding canal irrigation, is in the nature of a colony compared to old established parts of the country; and consequently, agricultural labour has always been better rewarded in this part of the country, than in most other parts of India. In the Provinces of Behar, Orissa, Assam, large parts of the United Provinces, and in many other parts of India, agricultural labour is much worse rewarded than in the flourishing canal colonies of the Punjab, where they earn about 3d. a day.

In 1930, when severe trade depression began, the value of silver, and the values of all other commodities expressed in relation to gold, generally went down to almost half of their former values; but the Government maintained the value of the silver rupee, which was even in 1930 greatly in excess of the actual value of silver in it, at its former level of 18d. with the result that, before the collapse of the British gold standard, the rupee represented nearly three times the amount of the agricultural produce which the rupee should legitimately have had the power of purchasing. If the slightest movement in the prices of commodities had taken place in the reverse direction, and the rupee had begun to represent even slightly less than the value of

silver in it, the Government would have immediately debased the quality of the coin, and would have raised their taxes, and taken a hundred other measures to keep up their revenues. But, by means of their artificially bolstered up ratio of exchange, they have been getting very much larger than their due share of the produce of the soil from the producers as land tax all these years; and at one time their demand was in many cases, equal to or more than the actual value of the produce. And yet the Government have contemptuously ignored the most urgent importunities of the spokesmen of the starving population of India, to hold an enquiry into the question of the ratio of exchange.

None of the previous autocratic rulers of India, with all their misrule and extravagance, could have so drained off the resources of the land, as the British have done, with their mild and well-conducted government and their insidious methods of trade and finance. Nearly the same proportions between different shares of the Government, the landlord, and the cultivator, as existed in the days of Moghal rulers, are observed now, at least in theory; and yet the majority of the peasantry which in the old days never knew famine, except in very rare years of actual drought, now live under perpetual famine conditions. Years of plenty and dry years are all years of scarcity for the people of the land. By some subtle processes, the produce of the soil disappears before the very eyes of the producers, without their having the power to prevent it.

One of these subtle processes is, as I have just mentioned, the artificially raised value of the rupee to much more than its real worth, which provides the government with a crude pretence for extracting much more than they theoretically claim, as their share of the produce. But this process, in its virulent form was only of temporary duration. The value of the rupee considerably went down consequent on the fall in the value of British sterling, and further improvement in this direction has come about since the outbreak of the War, on account of rise in prices of commodities. The more permanent, and much more dangerous and destructive process of exploitation of the people, is the mercantile system of the British, and to a lesser extent, of other so-called advanced nations of the world. In the old days of India's prosperity, however heavily the rulers might tax the produce of the soil, and whatever the proportions of its distribution between the landlords and the tenants, the people, although they might suffer some inconvenience from the greed of the rulers and the landlords, could not be deprived of their very means of subsistence. The utmost folly of the rulers could not suggest to them any other methods of disposal of the produce of land than on maintaining the people themselves, either by bestowing on favourite courtiers or concubines valuable portions of the entire value of which consisted in the welfare of the people, or by indulging in extravagant programmes, of which the entire

consisted in the employment of some inhabitants of the country.

Had all rulers in all times been foolish, vain, and extravagant, which apparently was not and could not be, the folly and extravagance of those rulers could not have impoverished their entire kingdoms. Their hobbies of adorning their Courts and Capitals with works of art, could not divert any large numbers of people, from the fundamental productive occupation of agriculture. Even their little quarrels and wars with their neighbours did not cause widespread waste; nor did these seriously disturb normal occupations of the rural population. It is said that, during the Sikh wars in the Punjab, which consisted of some of the most sanguinary battles ever fought on the Indian soil, population in the countryside were ploughing their fields, while armies of the contending parties were engaged in warfare in the neighbourhood. All but a few people, were always and everywhere employed in producing human food and other necessities and conveniences of life; and as these could not be exported on any large scale to distant places, there never could be or was any shortage of food, necessities, and conveniences of life anywhere, except in the very rare years of severe drought and famine.

Similarly, whatever proportions of distribution of the produce of the soil between the landlord and the cultivator might have been adopted, the landlord could have no other manner of disposal of his share, than to

maintain his people one way or the other. His taste for finery only meant his maintaining a few weavers and craftsmen in his neighbourhood. His wildest hobbies could not carry him beyond the folly of maintaining a few unproductive idlers as his retinues or attendants from amongst his own people. By far the largest numbers of men were employed in producing human food and necessities, which were of necessity divided among the population in the neighbourhood; so there could be no dearth of food and necessities even for the poorest people. The very few idle tastes of landlords and rich people, on account of the very narrow and limited scope for their growing excessive or wild, could only feed very small numbers of idlers in the days of India's prosperity. The worst spendthrifts and libertines among landlords and rich people, by reason of limited human energy for active dissipation and dissoluteness, had a period of their waywardness; so their worst follies could only cause temporary inconvenience to their dependents. Moreover, only a few from amongst the large numbers of landlords and rich people, at any one time, could have wasteful tendencies; so the bad effects of their actions, on the population as a whole, were greatly overbalanced by the good conduct generally of the great majority of them.

In one of his speeches in Parliament, the great orator, Edmund Burke, compared the British mercantile rule of India to the so-called misrule of the old barbarian rulers, in the following forceful terms:—

"The Asiatic conquerors very soon abated of their ferocity because they made the conquered country their own. They rose or fell with the rise and fall of the territory they lived in. Fathers there deposited the hopes of their posterity; the children there beheld the monuments of their fathers. Here, their lot was finally cast; and it is the normal wish of all that their lot should not be cast in bad land. Poverty and desolation are not a recreating prospect to the eye of man, and there are very few who can bear to grow old among the curses of the whole people. If their passion or avarice drove the Tartar Lords to acts of rapacity or tyranny, there was time enough, even in the short life of man, to bring round the ill-effects of abuse of power upon the power itself. If hoards were made by violence and tyranny, they were still domestic hoards, and domestic profusion or the rapine of a more powerful and prodigal hand restored them to the people. With many disorders and with few political checks upon power, nature had still fair play; the sources of acquisition were not dried up, and therefore the trade, the manufactures, and the commerce of the country flourished. Even avarice and usury itself operated both for the preservation and employment of national wealth. The husbandman and manufacturer paid heavy interest; but then they augmented the fund from whence they were again to borrow. Their resources were dearly bought, but they were sure, and the general stock of the community grew by the general effect.

"But under the British Government all this order is reversed. The Tartar invasion was mischievous, but it is our protection that destroys India. It was their enmity but it is our friendship. Our conquest there after twenty years is as crude as it was the first day. The natives scarcely know what it is to see the grey head of an Englishman. Young men, boys almost, govern there, without society, and without sympathy with the natives. They have no more social habits with the people than if they still resided in England, nor indeed, any species of intercourse, but that which is necessary to making a sudden fortune, with a view to remote settlement. Animated with all the avarice of age and all the impetuosity of youth, they roll in one after another; wave after wave, and there is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for food that is continually wasting. Every rupee of profit made by an Englishman is lost for ever to India."

Many European travellers have given glowing accounts of the great prosperity and wealth of India, before the British began to acquire political control of the country. Indeed, it was the lure of Eastern wealth that brought European traders to this land. We are, however, concerned to know, for our present discussion, the general economic condition of the people of the country, just about the time when the British began to acquire large possessions in India, in order to compare

it with the general depression and poverty which followed in every area and district, immediately after the accession of power of the British over it. In the beginning of the year 1800, Lord Wellesley deputed one Dr. Buchanan, an Englishman of great ability and power of observation, to make a detailed tour of Southern India, with the object of making enquiries into the economic condition of the people; and the same gentleman was later employed by the East India Company to make similar enquiries into the economic condition of the people of Northern India. The accounts of Dr. Buchanan's travels in Southern India and Northern India, which give very minute descriptions of the lives, occupations, and general pursuits of men and women, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, furnish extremely interesting and highly instructive details of the material condition of the people of those days.

Both in Southern and Northern India, Dr. Buchanan found agriculture in a highly developed state; but signs of decay had already set in, on account of the neglect and deterioration of irrigation works, and the uncertainty of Government demand in Northern India, immediately after the establishment of East India Company's rule. Both in Southern and Northern India, spinning and weaving were the national industries of the people, spinning being mostly done by women, which considerably added to the family incomes; but these industries were greatly discouraged by the East India Company. It was not considered any disgrace by

women of the highest castes to spin cotton. In Southern India, large zamindars and jagirdars, who had formerly constructed and kept in repair large and useful irrigation works, and had supplied initiative and capital for the improvement of cultivation, had been forcibly ejected from their possessions by the East India Company, on the plea of governmental ownership of all the lands of the country. The company, after dispossessing the zamindars of their lands had made direct settlements with the ryots on greatly enhanced rents, and the result was that useful irrigation works were slowly going to decay and cultivation was neglected for want of initiative and capital. Land taxes were collected from miserable ryots with the utmost rigour, and very large sums of money, which had formerly been spent in the improvement of the country were now diverted to the purchase of Company's investments. The result was that the country was being impoverished, large and well-built towns were losing their populations, and the population of the country generally was declining. The lands roundabout Madras, which had been in the Company's possession for half a century, when Dr. Buchanan visited the place, had undergone complete devastation, and had only a few signs of old prosperity left in them.

The whole territory of the East India Company was being fast converted into a desert; whilst in the adjoining territory of Mysore, which had been devastated during Tippu's reign and in the Mysore wars, but had

been recently restored to its old Hindu Raja, Dr. Buchanan found agriculture and prosperity of the country quickly reviving. "Everything wears an aspect of beginning restoration. The villages are rebuilding, the canals are clearing, and in place of antelopes and forest guards, we have the peaceful bullock returning to his useful labour." Similarly, industries were also reviving in the adjoining state of Mysore. The old industrial and trading centres were regaining their prosperity, and thriving trade in chintz, gold-lace, muslins and silk cloths, shawls, saffron and musks, with places as far off as Dacca and Kashmere, was rapidly springing up in the Mysore territory. At Tonuru Dr. Buchanan saw the magnificent reservoir of Yadavnadi. "Two mountain torrents here had united their streams, and forced a way through a gap between two rocky hills. Ramanuja stopped up this gap by a mound said to be 78 cubits high, 150 long, and at the base 250 cubits thick. The superfluous water is let off by a channel which has been cut with great labour through one of the hills, at such length as to enable it to water a great deal of the subjacent plain which is three or four miles in extent. When the reservoir is full it contains a sufficient quantity of water to supply the cultivators for two years." The farm labourers in Mysore earned 3d. to 4d. a day in those days, which would be equivalent to 1sh. or 1sh. 4d. of the present times.

In the adjoining East India Company's territories, Dr. Buchanan found cultivation declining, irrigation

works going into disuse and decay, people extremely poor, and wages of labour not even half of what they were in Mysore. The Company were not at all concerned with the condition of the people, so long as their servants pushed up their revenues, which were in greater part spent in the purchase of Company's Investments.

In Northern India, Dr. Buchanan found the same evil effects of the extension of the East India Company's rule, as he had found in Southern India. Wherever the Company's dominion extended, the country became more peaceful than before; but it was the peace of starvation caused by heavy and ever-increasing land assessments, and suppression of national industries. Spinning and weaving were the great national industries of India, and provided profitable employment to millions of people all over the country. Each weaver of cotton and silk cloths made 40 to 50 rupees of those days per year by his labour. Women who spun cotton only a few hours a day, made 4 to 5 rupees a year; but as the demand for fine goods was constantly declining after the advent of the East India Company, women were losing their spare time employment. The weavers of fine stuffs were moreover greatly harassed by the East India Company. "Each man, on becoming bound (Asami) to the company received two rupees, and engaged not to work for any person until he had made as much as the Company required, and no other advance has ever been made by the Commercial Residents. The agent orders each man to make a certain number of pieces of such or such

goods, and he is paid for each on its delivery according to the prices stated in the tables." This advance of two rupees to each man was forced on unwilling weavers, who thereafter became company's slaves; being bound to supply the commercial agents whatever goods they wanted, and forced to accept whatever prices the agents chose to give them for the goods. Never in the History of man an industrious and thriving people have been subjected to such mercantile exploitation. Numerous other industries besides spinning and weaving, which had prospered before, were similarly ruined by ruthless acts of the Company's agents and servants.

Cultivation of the country suffered even worse than other industries, if such were possible, under the British domination. Giving an account of Gorakhpur district, the revenue of which had been farmed to a British Officer, Dr. Buchanan says:—

'It is indeed said that during the Government of Suja-ud-Dowla, the district was in a much better state than at present; and that the rents having been farmed to Colonel Hanny, that gentleman took such violent measures in the collection, as to depopulate the country, and I certainly perceive many traces of cultivation where now there are wastes and woods'.

Wherever British dominion extended, poverty and waste succeeded to opulence and prosperity. Landlords and the rulers, before the advent of the British, had exacted as much from the cultivators as they could, but there were limits to their exactions, and whatever

they received from the people, went back to them in one way or the other. The British tax collectors greatly exceeded in their demands the limits which even the previous 'barbarian rulers' had imposed on themselves; and all their collections, after paying for the expenses of an indifferent administration left the soil of India, never to return back in any shape. A traveller thus writes about the destructive effects of the early British rule in India:—

"They join the most resolute courage to the most cautious prudence, nor have they their equals in the art of ranging themselves in battle array and in fighting order. If to so many military qualities they knew how to join the arts of Government, if they showed a concern for the circumstances of the husbandman and the gentleman, and exerted as much ingenuity and solicitude in relieving and easing the people of God, as they do in whatever concerns their military affairs, no nation in the world would be preferable to them or prove worthier of command. But such is the little regard which they show to the people of these Kingdoms, and such their apathy and indifference for their welfare that the people under their dominion groan everywhere, and are reduced to poverty and distress. O God! come to the assistance of thine afflicted servants, and deliver them from the oppression they suffer."

Sir John Shore, who was the Governor-General of India after Lord Cornwallis, thus described the evil effects of the mercantile rule of the British on the people

of India:—

‘The Company are merchants as well as sovereigns of the country. In the former capacity they engross its trade, whilst in the latter they appropriate the revenues. The remittances to Europe of revenues are made in the commodities of the country which are purchased by them.’

‘Whatever allowance we may make for the increased industry of the subjects of the state, owing to the enhanced demand of the produce of it, (supposing the demand to be enhanced) there is reason to conclude that the benefits are more than counterbalanced by evils inseparable from the system of a remote foreign domination.

The rulers have formally ceased to be traders, the Company’s investments have ceased; but their place has been taken by a whole nation of merchants, and their investments have been replaced by fifty times heavier Home Charges.’

In the days of India’s misgovernment, turmoil, and insecurity of private property, we have seen that cultivation of the country had reached a high degree of perfection, and people prospered under the indigenous forms of government. Even the worst detractors of the misrule of the Oudh Kings, which led to the annexation of that rich Kingdom to the Company’s Indian territories, without even the pretence of provocation or offence from her imbecile rulers, have not alleged that the masses starved in that kingdom. In fact, men of

Oudh were the most stalwart, brave and hardy people of India in those days. All the armies of the East India Company, which conquered the Indian Empire for them were drawn from Purbias or Tilangas, the inhabitants of Oudh, and these were the very same people who very nearly overturned the Empire in the rising of 1857. And yet, within a few years of the annexation of the ancient and rich country of those sturdy people to the British Indian Empire, Purbias are today one of the poorest people, who, for want of sufficient means of livelihood in their own country, principally on account of the rack-renting of landlords and crushing taxation, are scattered all over Northern India, mostly as low paid menial servants.

This is the progress which the brave people of an ancient and fertile country have made within a short period of their British connection. The peasants of one of the richest and fast developing Provinces of India, namely the Punjab, do not, as I have explained, earn more than 3d. a day for themselves and their families. These 3d. represent nearly a fifth part of the net produce of land after deducting the expenses of the upkeep of agricultural cattle and the cost of the seeds and manures etc. The remaining four-fifths of the net produce go out of the hands of the actual producers, as soon as it is raised, to maintain the complex and expensive administrative machinery of the Government, great multitudes of idle landlords within the country, and still greater multitudes of manufacturers, merchants, and

financiers all over the world. Bounteous Nature rewards the labours of tillers of the soil generously, but not in such profusion as to enable a fifth part of the net produce of land to feed, clothe and lodge the actual producers and their families. Actual producers should obviously have the first claim on the produce of the soil. But by a strange perversion of simple requirements of justice, and even in disregard of true interests of the wealth and prosperity of the country, they are deprived of four-fifths of the produce; agriculture of the country is allowed to go to decay; and administrators, idlers, and great multitudes of other parasites at home and abroad are allowed to grab the produce.

AGRICULTURE—III

Unluckily for the welfare and happiness of the people of India, the British combine in them the exalted functions of rulers with the occupations of traders and money-lenders, and this we have seen has conduced to the poverty of the masses, as much as the other causes which were mentioned in the previous chapter.

The administration of the East India Company was considered unduly expensive and highly detrimental to the prosperity of the country even by some of the more conscientious of the Company's servants; and some of them went to the length of publicly denouncing the Company's mercantile rule of India. But the gross revenues of India in the year 1857-58 after which the administration of the country passed to the crown, were under 32 million pounds, the land revenue being roughly 16 millions pounds, the Home Charges nearly 4 million pounds, and the so-called national debt of India stood at under 60 million pounds. Twenty years after the assumption of the government of India by the Crown, the gross revenues of the country including receipts from railways and irrigation works had gone up to 50 million pounds land revenue being about 20 million pounds, the Home Charges nearly 12 million pounds,

and the so-called national debt of India, stood at 140 million pounds. In another twenty years, the gross revenue of India, including receipts from railways and irrigation works, had gone up to 100 million pounds, land revenue being about 26 million pounds, the Home Charges 25 million pounds, and the so-called national debt of India stood at over 225 million pounds. This situation, except for some rise in the revenue and the Home Charges and the national debt, remained much the same until the year 1914, when the Great War broke out; and then the Government got the opportunity and the excuse of burdening India with much heavier taxation, and saddling her with enormous debts. Since then, although the total land revenue of India, and therefore the annual wealth of the country, have remained practically stationary at something over 30 million pounds, the gross revenues of the state, including receipts from railways and irrigation works, and the Civil and Military expenditure of the country, and the so-called national debt of India have all gone up with unprecedented speed. In 1929-30, the gross revenues of the state, including provincial revenues and incomes from state railways, were over 220 million pounds, the Home and Military Charges were each about 45 million pounds, and the so-called national debt of India stood at the monstrous sum of 800 million pounds. Since 1858, the burden of taxation on the people has increased sixfold, though the land revenue, and therefore the annual wealth of India have only doubled, the Home

Charges have gone up more than ten times, and the so-called national debt of India has mounted up fourteen fold, and is still mounting up rapidly.

Growing poverty of the people led them to suspect that the system of government was in some manner responsible for their woes, and they began to demand some share in the government of the country. To satisfy this demand, when it had grown beyond the stage of being safely ignored, the rulers devised the clever scheme of Reforms of 1920, which created some additional departments and offices, to further add to the confusion of the slow-moving machinery of the government and to the burdens and miseries of the people. Under the Government of India Act of 1935, provinces enjoy some measure of autonomy, but as has been seen in the actual working of the act, the powers conferred even by that act are inadequate for the purpose of improving the economic condition of the people.

It would be extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, to tell exactly how much of the annual wealth of India this great organization of the government costs the people; but one way or the other, I reckon, it takes away about one-fourth of the entire produce of the soil. The income-tax, the super taxes, customs, excise, and salt taxes, are seemingly paid off by different sections of the population of the country; but these are all finally derived from the produce of the soil, and the poor agriculturist has to bear the brunt of them all. Again, the railways, posts and telegraphs, which have now become

indispensable to civilized human existences, and are also beneficial to communications and internal trade of the country, are extremely expensive to society. These provide employment to less than one per cent of the population of the country, but cost the country not less than ten per cent of the gross produce of the soil.

Since 1857, as has already been mentioned, the burden of taxation on the people has gone up sixfold. Has the national income, or the per-capita income of the country gone up in any such proportion, or gone up at all? The land revenue of India is supposed to increase or decrease proportionately to the rise or fall in the prices of the produce of land; the government claiming a certain share of the net produce without reference to its money values. If the land revenue of India, which has only doubled since 1857, could be taken as a true index of the rise in the per-capita income of the population, which is mainly agricultural, then we would know that, expressed in money, the national income of India is now twice as much as it was in 1857. But this estimate of the increase of national income of India is low. In the days of the East India Company, in the greater part of India, although in theory, the share of the government in the produce of land was half of the net assets, in practice it was much more. Adjustments were later necessitated to reduce the claim of the government to actual half net assets; so the increase in the amount of land revenue of the government does not represent true increase in the national income of the

country. However, making allowance for this circumstance we may accept the national income, or the income per inhabitant of British India, expressed in money, as three times of what it was in 1857. Thus with six times heavier taxation of the people, while the national income has only trebled since 1857, we see that the burden of taxation on the people is twice as heavy as it was in 1857, at which time too, some of the more honest British administrators considered that the people of India were extremely heavily taxed. Even as late as the year 1932, Lord Linlithgow remarked in the pamphlet already referred to that India did not need only good government but also inexpensive government.

And yet British politicians and financiers are always striving to 'Broaden the basis of taxation in India' as they say. The financial assessor to the Statutory Commission in his lengthy report, which the Commissioners fully endorsed, without giving even a passing thought to the poverty of the Indian masses, spent all his abilities on the one problem of how more money could be raised by further taxation of the people. On the plea of devising means of providing more money for education, health, and similar other departments, which they term 'Nation-Building departments' but which, from the facility with which the nation has consented to be taxed on such spurious pleas on previous occasions, should be called 'Nation fooling' departments, he proposed the imposition of income-tax on agricultural incomes. As if the taxes and cesses on land were not already grinding

down the agricultural population of the country, that they should be subjected to heavier taxation still! The land revenue or land tax already amounts to fifty per cent of net agricultural incomes, and with cesses, it comes to over sixty per cent. And yet Mr. Layton proposed to increase it!

Could there be anything more unjustified than that a banker or a financier fresh from some London office, should take the imaginary figure of 8 pounds as the income per head of the population of India, in order to justify the military waste of 45 million pounds annually, by making some misleading comparisons with the real or supposed military expenditures of Japan and other countries, and should then proceed to propose fresh heavy taxation of the agricultural population, without even giving a passing thought to the economic condition of the people proposed to be further taxed? He complacently assumed that there could be no retrenchment in the civil expenditure, and that a saving of a million pounds or so would be all that could be effected, by several years persistent efforts, in the annual military expenditure of 45 million pounds. But he very confidently proposed a further taxation of 20 million pounds, to be imposed within the next ten years, on the already overtaxed agricultural and industrial populations!

On the other hand, he was extremely nervous about the increased revenues of the government from Customs, which he would even reduce in order to encourage imports of foreign goods. An increase of 58 per cent

in annual imports within the six years from 1923 to 1929 did not quite satisfy the author of the financial report. He wished and hoped for still greater and faster growth of India's foreign trade; but would not risk a set-back in it even if he were to forego some income from customs; for that loss could be made good by still heavier taxation of the people of India. The following sentiments of the author of the report are deserving of especial mention.

'These considerations suggest that, though there may be setbacks, the growth of India's foreign trade, which has recently been very rapid, is likely to continue at an even faster rate than heretofore. But there is one qualification. This conclusion is to a certain extent contingent on fiscal policy. The standard rate of duty of India's tariff, viz., 15 per cent, with 30 per cent on luxury goods, is already high for a mainly agricultural country, and, in some cases rates have been put so high as to be prohibitive. The match duty, for example, has almost ceased to yield any revenue at all. Upto the present, the increase in revenues has largely been obtained from a few items, such as sugar, cotton goods, oil imports, Jute exports etc. But the revenue from miscellaneous imports has been increasing, and may be expected to expand. It is possible that in a number of cases duties are already at or beyond the point of maximum yield, and that more revenue might be obtained from a general lowering of rates. Moreover, it might be worthwhile, even from purely revenue point of view, to lower duties,

even at the risk of losing revenue at the moment, for the sake of encouraging the general economic development of the country. On the other hand, a policy of high protection, though it might stimulate the creation of particular industries in India, would be a charge on the existing economic activities of India, and would prevent the expansion of revenue which is here contemplated.'

Encouragement of the imports of foreign, preferably British goods, which they call, 'the general economic development of the country', discouragement of Indian industries, the growth of which they fear, would be a charge on the existing economic activities of India, and, 'expansion of government's revenues' of a country already groaning under an unbearable burden of taxation, have been the only concerns of British administrators of India since the earliest days of the East India Company; and these considerations continue unabated today.

But even the drain of maintaining one of the most expensive governments and one of the most brilliant standing armies in the world, and the useful though highly expensive railways and post and telegraph services, could never have brought the people of India to such a low ebb of exhaustion, as the creation, by the security of the British rule, of the indolent classes of ruling chiefs, landlords, and proprietors, and the mercantile and financial exploitation of India by Great Britain and other foreign countries have done.

In this chapter, I will not refer to the methods employed by the servants of the East India Company, to

kill Indian industries, in order to encourage and foster their own; nor will I further refer to the civilized systems of tariffs and manipulations of currency and exchange which have been employed by the successors of the East India Company, for what they call 'encouraging the general economic development of the country'. Some reference to these matters will be made later on. Here, I will confine myself to the discussion of the wholesale despoilation of the masses by the systems of distribution of the produce of the soil, which enable landlords and large proprietors under the protection of British laws and guarantees, to engross to themselves half the gross produce of land, without giving any service for it; and to the systems of trade and finance of Great Britain and of other countries, which in their turn despoil landlords and rich and poor people all alike. The classes of landlords and proprietors existed before the British rule, but they had to perform their legitimate duties and services to the people; otherwise they could not long remain in the quiet possession of their estates and fat incomes. Extensive trade and credit existed in the country; but then it was trade in the exchange of commodities of the produce of land and labour of the country, which provided profitable employments to great numbers of workers, and credit to facilitate exchange of these commodities.

But, whilst the present land revenue system of India, as I have tried to explain, by taxing indigent people, tends to kill agricultural industry of the country,

the systems of distribution of the produce, besides providing vast numbers of idle people with decent subsistence, leave to the landlords and proprietors, according to the extents of their possessions, ample means of indulging in luxuries and superfluities; and the civilized merchants of the West point to them how with their surplus means, they should exchange the bread of their people for toys and trinkets of Western and preferably British manufactures. Whereas, formerly all sensible rulers considered it their duty and interest to encourage agriculture and industry of the country, and it was impossible for the worst libertines either to starve agricultural workers, or to dissipate their fortunes in a lifetime of frivolity, our present rulers do not consider it their duty to interfere in the despoilation of the peasantry, and there are hardly any landlords in India, or for that matter, not many ruling princes even, who have not dissipated, within short periods, all the hoarded fortunes of their ancestors, and have not, in addition, mortgaged several years produce of their estates, or several years revenues of their states, in advance.

The smaller landlord secure in his possessions and income, makes display of his little Western trinkets in the midst of the poverty and filth of his village population, or awkwardly goes about in semi-Western style, in the district or provincial headquarters. The richer landlords and princes, leaving starvation and misery at home, find it convenient to go out to England and other foreign countries in summer, there to find ready prepared means

of squandering away their energies, and several years' hard-earned bread of their people. Such landlords and princes look up to the British for protection against the just wrath of the people at their misconduct. But as the behaviour and example of landlords and princes lend support to the tottering economy of their own country, the British are never backward in giving the landlords and princes their countenance and protection. Of all the methods of killing indigenous industries of India and of encouraging Western manufactures and trade, this one of permitting and encouraging landlords and princes to acquire means of indulging in Western luxuries, is the most convenient. Some of the more sensible British traders and politicians talk of improving the condition of the Indian masses, by protecting them from the exactions of landlords and princes, in order to secure richer, more extensive, and more stable markets for their goods. But to follow such advice requires patience; and they cannot exercise patience when there are ready means, howsoever transient and dangerous, of satisfying their greed.

It is thus, by exploiting the masses, through the land-owning and princely classes, and by means of unfair tariffs and currency and exchange manipulations that the British have built up the enormous foreign trade of India or over four hundred and sixty million pounds annually, which has arisen sevenfold within the last eighty years. It is not an index of the growing prosperity of India, or of her economic development, as

the publicity officers of the government represent; but a very accurate measure of the extent of her impoverishment year after year, by foreign and principally British mercantile systems. The usual argument put forward by the British of free trade and mutually advantageous exchange of commodities is not tenable of commerce between India and Britain. Commerce to be of mutual advantage to any two countries between which it is carried on, must be on the basis of exchange of the products of approximately equal amounts of labour time of those two countries. Then, by encouraging the inhabitants of the two countries to develop their agriculture and industries, for which their soils, climates, and conditions are suited, to the utmost extent, under the certainty of the surplus of each being exchanged for the useful products of the other, on a fair and honest basis of exchange, commerce will tend to mutual development and prosperity of the two countries. On the basis of exchange of the products of equal or approximately equal labour times, no right thinking person could have any objection to the exchange of Indian corn or cotton for the iron of Birmingham or the fabrics of Lancashire. But when political power, false reasoning, manipulations of exchange, and unreal favourable balances of trade, are all employed to further a commerce in which one day's whiteman's labour exchanges for twenty day's labour of an Indian worker, then thinking Indians have certainly a right to advise their countrymen not to have any

commercial dealings on such disadvantageous terms, with whitemen. If British workmen are more skilful than Indian workmen, as they certainly are in specialized industries, and each one of them is worth twenty times the wages of an Indian worker, then the self-evident truth is that Indians are not fit or rich enough to trade with them.

The ordinary English mill-worker with five, six or seven shillings, daily earnings, lives in a manner which fairly well-to-do Indians cannot afford. Two or three well-built rooms, furnished with some sort of floor covering, window curtains, and chairs and tables, a fairly well-filled wardrobe, a clock, electric lights and heating arrangements, form the ordinary accommodations of an English worker and his family, and three or four meals a day, consisting of meat, milk, butter, bread, tea and coffee etc. reinforced with the usual drop of wine and also smoke, their ordinary subsistence. Frequent holidays and amusements of various kinds are considered indispensable to the healthful existence of the worker; and when the House of Commons discuss means of reducing unemployment, or for the production of cheap goods, no one dare suggest the obvious remedy of cutting down this altogether untenable style of living of their common people. Indeed, some of them even suggest the need of further raising the standards of living of their men for the purpose of reducing unemployment. As the English merchant princes and politicians are themselves living in

extravagant styles which were unknown in any previous age, they dare not suggest lowering the wages of the workers. They do not care if they render the condition of their countrymen more and more precarious, if only they themselves continue to earn fantastic incomes for the time being.

A government based on mercantile exploitation of the governed, is subject to all the vicissitudes of ordinary trading ventures. A slight miscarriage of tactics in handling the affairs of such a precarious government may result in disaster to it, just as a slight miscalculation of chances in a venture of trade may result in the ruin of the venture. The efforts of British statesmen, therefore, in the interest of the security and stability of the Empire, should be more properly directed to the restoration of prosperity of India, rather than to the maintenance of their precarious trading and financial advantages in this country. Instead of devising measures for continuing and increasing their trade with India, they should strive for the happiness and prosperity of their own distracted land, by the return of very large numbers of their idle workers to their old and honest agricultural occupations, for which they have unlimited scope in their great dominions. The paper guarantees, which their merchant and money-lending classes insist on getting from India, although if procured by them may enable them to profitably trade with India for sometime longer, these will never bring back peace and contentment to India, or prosperity and quiet of the old happy

life of England to their own people. Perhaps nothing truer could be said of the evanescent nature of commercial wealth, and true and lasting greatness of agricultural prosperity, than their great sage Adam Smith has said:—

‘The capital, however, that is acquired to any country by commerce and manufactures, is always a precarious and uncertain possession, till some part of it has been secured and realized in the cultivation and improvement of its lands. A merchant, it has been said very properly, is not necessarily the citizen of any particular country. It is in a great measure indifferent to him from what place he carries on his trade; and a very trifling disgust will make him remove his capital, and together with it, all the industry, which it supports, from one country to another. No part of it can be said to belong to any particular country, till it has been spread, as it were over the face of that country, either in buildings, or in the lasting improvement of lands. No vestige now remains of the great wealth said to have been possessed by the greater part of Hanse Towns, except in obscure histories of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is even uncertain where some of them were situated, or to what towns in Europe the Latin names given to some of them belong. But though the misfortunes of Italy in the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, greatly diminished the commerce and manufactures of the cities of Lombardy and Tuscanay, those countries still continue to

be among the most populous and best cultivated in Europe. The civil wars of Flanders, and the Spanish Government which succeeded them, chased away the great commerce of Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges. But Flanders still continue to be one of the richest, best cultivated and most populous provinces of Europe. The ordinary revolutions of war and Government easily dry up the sources of that wealth which arises from commerce only. That which arises from the more solid improvement of agriculture is much more durable, and cannot be destroyed but by those more violent convulsions occasioned by the depredations of hostile and barbarous nations continued for a century or two together; such as those that happened for sometime before and after the fall of the Roman Empire in the Western provinces of Europe.'

But the mercantile greed of Englishmen heeds not the words of sages; and not only have they not shown concern for the circumstances of the husbandman and the gentleman of India, but they have systematically expropriated the rural population of their own country, and have ruined some of their most fertile lands only to obtain greater monetary returns from land, than they could have got by simple agricultural operations of the tillers of the soil.

This naturally weakened the peasantry of their country, so much so that Italy, a small country without money and resources, but with a virile population, made Great Britain, at the height of her mercantile greatness,

seek excuses for not interfering with her high handedness during the Abyssinian campaign. The fat lion, sleepy from over-feeding, and accustomed to keep a lazy guard over the vast and scattered possessions and wealth of rich English merchants, found it safe to slink away before the fierce growling of the hungry wolf of Italy. And this, because, Englishmen, spurning the wealth and greatness which the work of a brave and hardy people on a rich soil ensured to them, have gone after pots and pans; and instead of braving the toils and hardships of out-door country life of their forefathers, have chosen the comforts and safety of indoor existence behind closed bolts and bars.

AGRICULTURE—IV

It is contended by many that improvements in the methods of cultivation, and inculcation of habits of industry and thrift among the agricultural population of India will satisfactorily solve the problem of their poverty. This is an utter misconception of the real problem. If it were possible for the Indian peasant to improve his condition by hard work and thrift, he would not have resigned his lot to the tender mercies of the tax-collector, landlord, merchant and the money-lender. Moreover, agriculture having been the staple industry of the people of India for thousands of years past, and the fountain-head of all the revenues of the government, it may well be imagined that the people of India have not neglected to effect all improvements possible within their means in the methods of cultivation, or that her British rulers have not failed to bring all the resources of science to the aid of the toiling peasant for increasing the produce of the soil. In addition to maintaining great scientific institutions for the purpose of research, the Government have at different times set up numerous and extensive enquiries on agricultural matters, with the genuine object of improving agriculture of the country, either directly, or by means of improvements of artificial irrigation and

communications. In the domain of agriculture proper, that is, in the matter of producing better and heavier crops per acre, or in reducing the labour and expenses of the agriculturist, the work of scientists and investigators has not produced any tangible results, except to bring forth a few suggestions for better selection of seeds, better manuring of lands, and better rotation of crops etc. Indeed most of the investigators have been forced to come to the conclusion that the methods of cultivation of the Indian peasant give testimony of a high degree of development of agricultural knowledge in the country, and that the Indian peasant toils patiently, uncomplainingly and heroically under extremely unfavourable conditions of existence.

However, the policy of the Government in regard to artificial irrigation of lands has resulted in the construction of some of the largest and most wonderful irrigation works which, besides colossal dams, barrages, and head regulators, comprise 75,000 miles of canals and distributaries spread all over the country, and especially in the dry north. These great irrigation works have rendered nearly fifty million acres or an area equal to the whole of England and Scotland, or ten times the cultivable area of the whole of Egypt, of imperfectly irrigated and barren waste lands, into verdant fields and smiling valleys; and would have redounded to the lasting glory of the British rule of India, if these works had also relieved the poverty of at least those fifty million people who labour in the irrigated tracts. However,

as conditions actually are, large crops to the value of a hundred million pounds are annually raised on lands watered from government irrigation channels; but these crops are not meant to provide decent subsistence to the producers of them. Here, as elsewhere in India, the lot of agricultural worker remains the same—a life of penury, starvation, sickness, and premature death.

The same mercantile system which has sapped the wealth of the rest of India, has prompted the construction of these large irrigation works of the Government, and has brought about its same unfailing results here as elsewhere. The principal objects of all irrigation works in India have been to widen the field for the investment of British Capital, to increase and facilitate exports of food grains and raw materials—wheat, cotton, oil seeds etc.—to British, and incidentally to other countries also, and to encourage British industries and trade. As raw materials for manufactures, except during industrial depressions, generally command better sales and prices than the grains, that is, these exchange more easily and for large quantities of knickknacks and trinkets; the tendency in the canal irrigated tracts has been to grow commercial crops for foreign export; and so the landlords, or the intermediaries between the producers and the merchants, have been the more effectively able to impoverish poor peasants in the canal irrigated tracts of India than elsewhere. Thus, irrigation, instead of being an inestimable blessing to the peasantry, as it should have been, only provides a large and open field

for the investment of British capital, and a very effective means to the landlords to impoverish the tillers of the soil, by exchanging the produce of land for useless articles of foreign manufactures.

In 1931 in his budget speech, the Finance Member to the Government of India, in reply to public criticism of the Government for their failure to provide protection to the raw cotton of India, urged the probable future consumption of Indian cotton in the Lancashire market, as the sole reason for the inactivity of the government in this respect. The British cotton enquiry committee in their report, published in July 1930, had indicated that the only way of reviving Lancashire's cotton trade with India, was, for Lancashire to use Indian cotton in place of American cotton; and, with this end in view, they had suggested overhauling of the entire plant and machinery of the cotton mills of Lancashire, so as to fit them for using Indian cotton, which they could not do on account of the roughness and short staple of the Indian cotton. Although, that day is certainly far off, and, indeed, it may never come, when proper atmosphere for the revival of Lancashire's cotton trade with India will be created, and the plant and machinery of the cotton mills of Lancashire will be all overhauled, yet the Government of India have arranged their fiscal policy to suit Lancashire's needs, as they have always done in every other respect before now. The plea for keeping the prices of Indian cotton low, in the interests of India, so that it may command

better sales in the market of Lancashire, in comparison with the American cotton was palpably wrong, because, howsoever low the prices of Indian cotton may go, so long as America has some surplus cotton to sell, the prices of American cotton will go down sufficiently to successfully compete with Indian cotton in the Lancashire market, if there should be in future a large market for cotton in Lancashire. Even wheat, which is a commodity of universal consumption has not maintained its prices, because there is plentiful production of it almost all the world over, and many new countries have surplus of it to sell, so there is no possibility of American cotton, with its uncertain and limited requirements abroad, maintaining its price high, to enable the Finance Member of the Indian Government to help Lancashire's cotton industry, by his policy of maintaining the price of Indian cotton low. The economic forces of the world, which are all tending to bring manufactures and trade to their proper place of secondary importance, compared with agriculture, cannot be controlled by India's Finance Member. His policy and actions can only react unfavourably to the interests of India, without materially benefiting the cause of Lancashire.

As I said, the marked tendency for commercial crops to be grown in the canal irrigated tracts of India only enables the landlords to effectively impoverish the cultivating classes; and at suitable moments, the Government, growing jealous of the apparently flourishing condition of the landlords step in, to claim any increase

in the produce of land as their share. Even in the most prosperous irrigated colonies of the Punjab, cultivators can barely eke out a precarious subsistence. Any increase in the produce or rise in the prices of commodities is immediately followed up by increased water rates and taxes, to ensure interest on foreign capital being fairly paid up. It also enables the Government to indulge in heavier programmes of borrowing on the security of increased revenues; and the increased revenues and borrowed money provide increased incentive to the Government to indulge in official waste. If there is still some chance of a surplus being left with the landlords, after satisfying the various demands, then the Government either manage to get the surplus by causing a slump in prices by their policy of exchange, or else enable a few additional motor cars, some additional yards of fine gaudy fabrics of foreign manufacture, or some other trumperies to be imported into the country-side, to celebrate the advent of a prosperous year, only to be succeeded by greater depression and more intense misery in the next bad years of crops. Thus, increased production from the soil is almost invariably taken by the state, and whatever little is left, is allowed to be frittered away by landlords and rich people, for procuring gew-gaws of foreign manufactures. Increased gains from cultivation are never allowed, as these should be, to augment the prosperity of the country-side, to better the condition of the tillers of the soil, and to accumulate the agricultural wealth of the country, in the shape of

improved cultivation and quality of soils, improved condition of agricultural cattle, improved houses for the cultivators, and improved means of communication of villagers among themselves, and with the towns.

It is taken for granted that agriculture of India cannot improve, because the condition of the cultivators is backward, and the condition of the cultivators cannot improve because cultivation of the country is so very primitive. This vicious circle has been created by the taxation, finance and trade policies of the Government. And there can be no remedy for it, unless and until the Government change their outlook and attitude and do not take every little indication of agricultural prosperity as an occasion for raising their demands, and indulging in further fresh schemes of financial exploitation of the people, and unless and until landlords are prohibited by law from taking any more than their proper economic rent, after completely and liberally recompensing the cultivators for their labour and expenses of farming. There is no inherent difficulty in the solution of the problem of poverty of the Indian masses, if the taxation of the Government and exactions of the landlords could be restrained and the self-sufficient nature of the old village life, so beautifully described by Sir Charles Metcalfe and others could be restored in essential respects:—

“The village communities are little Republics, having nearly everything that they want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations.

They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindu, Moghul, Maharatta, Sikh, English are masters in turn, but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves; a hostile army passes through the country; the village community collect the cattle within their walls, and let the enemy pass unprovoked. If plunder and devastation is directed against themselves, and the force employed be irresistible, they flee to friendly villages at a distance; but when the storm has passed over they return and resume their occupations. If a country remains for a series of years the scene of continued pillage and massacre, so that the villages cannot be inhabited, the scattered villagers nevertheless return whenever the power of peaceable possession revives. A generation may pass away, but the places of their fathers, the same site for the village, the same position of the houses, the same land, will be occupied by the descendants of those who were driven out when the village was depopulated; and it is not a trifling matter that will drive them out, for they will often maintain their post through times of disturbance and convulsions, and acquire strength sufficient to resist pillage and oppression with success.

“The union of village communities, each forming a separate little state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause, to the preservation of the people of India through all revolutions and changes,

which they have suffered; and it is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence. I wish, therefore, that the village constitution may never be disturbed, and I dread everything that has a tendency to break them up ”

Again Lieutenant Colonel Mark Wilks, in his ‘Historical Sketches of the South of India’ writes:—

“The small and extremely ancient Indian communities which still exist to some extent, are based on the communal ownership of the land, upon a direct linking up of agriculture and handicraft, and upon a fixed form of the division of labour, which is adopted as a cut and dried scheme, whenever new communities are founded. They constitute self-sufficient productive entities, the area of land upon which production is carried on ranging from a hundred to several thousand acres. The greater part of the products is produced for the satisfaction of the immediate needs of the community, not as commodities; and production itself is therefore independent of the division of labour which the exchange of commodities has brought about in Indian society as a whole. Only the superfluity of products undergoes transformation into commodities, this being in part a primary result of the activities of the State, to which, since immemorial days, a definite proportion of the produce has gone in the form of the rent in kind. In different regions of India, we find different forms of such communities. In the simplest form, the

land is communally tilled and its produce is divided among the members of the community, while every family carries on spinning, weaving etc., as an accessory domestic occupation. Side by side with the masses who are thus employed one and all in the same avocation, we have the following persons: the headman, who is judge, policeman, and tax gatherer rolled into one; the book-keeper who keeps the farming accounts, and registers everything relating thereto; a third official whose business it is to prosecute criminals, to protect travellers from afar, and to escort them to the next village; the ranger, who keeps the bounds between his own community and the neighbouring one; the overseer of the waters, who distributes to the tillers the water, that has been stored in the communal reservoirs; the Brahmin, who conducts the religious services; the schoolmaster who on the sand, teaches the children to read and write, and Calender-Brahmin who functions as astrologer, determining the times appropriate for sowing and harvesting, and making known which are lucky and unlucky days for various agricultural operations; a smith and a carpenter who make and repair agricultural implements; a potter who fashions all the earthenware utensils needed by the village community, a barber, a laundryman, a silversmith, occasionally a poet, who in some communities replaces the silversmith in others the schoolmaster. This dozen or so of persons is maintained at the cost of the community at large. If the population increases, a new community is established upon

virgin soil, after the model of the old one. The mechanism of the community is one characterized by the purposive division of labour; but a manufacturing division of labour is impossible, seeing that the market for the work of the smith, the carpenter etc., remains fixed; and seeing that at most, if the village be a very large one, there may be two or even three smiths, potters etc. instead of one. The law that regulates the division of the labour of the community operates here with the inviolable authority of Nature. Each of the handicraftsmen such as the smith etc. work in accordance with traditional customs, but independently, and without being subject to any sort of authority, performing in his own workshop, on his own initiative all the manipulations proper to his speciality. The simplicity of the productive organism in these self-sufficient communities, which continually reproduce their kind, and if destroyed by chance, reconstruct themselves in the same locality and under the same name—this simplicity unlocks for us the mystery of the unchangeableness of Asiatic societies, which contrasts so strongly with the perpetual dissolutions and reconstructions of Asiatic States, and with the unceasing changes of dynasties. The structure of economic element of the society remains unaffected by the storms in the political weather.”

Almost identical conditions of the economic structure of village life prevailed in other Asiatic countries. Thus about Java:—

“Under this simple form the inhabitants of

the country have lived from time immemorial. The boundaries of the villages have been but seldom altered and though the villages themselves have been sometimes injured, and even destroyed by war, famine and disease, the same name, the same limits, the same interests, and even the same families have continued for ages. The inhabitants give themselves no trouble about the breaking up and division of kingdoms; while the village remains entire, they care not to what power it is transferred, or to what sovereign it devolves; its internal economy remains unchanged”.

Alas! the little Republics of Indian village communities which survived through the misrule of the *Hindus, the Pathans, the Moghuls, the Maharattas, and the Sikhs*; and conduced so greatly to the strength, happiness, freedom, and prosperity of those communities, are gradually succumbing to the peaceful exploitation of their trader rulers. The lost prosperity of the Indian village communities can only be revived by reviving their republican constitutions and their entities as self-sufficient economic units. Men of goodwill the whole world over are supposed to be deploring in vain ‘the decay of craftsmanship, or of independence and contentment associated with the more primitive type of community,’ and are supposed to be wasting their efforts in trying to hold back the tide of progress, by throwing minor obstacle in its path. It is not the men of goodwill who are mistaken in their efforts, but it is the men of science who cannot distinguish between

harmful and healthy progress, and themselves and those who follow them, are being swept along by the tide of progress to the ocean of destruction.

About the people of India themselves, who for several generations have been carried on in the wake of the tide of the European progress, and are now being tossed about in helplessness and misery, a dim streak of light has lately appeared in their dark and depressing poverty. It is the rural uplift movement initiated by Mahatmaji, which is designed to check, and if possible to reverse the drift of Indians in the wake of the European progress, and to put them in the safe harbour of quiet contentment of their simple and sublime avocations and industries. The rural uplift movement is like a tiny spark thrown into a vast wilderness, which may either be suppressed for a time in its tiny state by the evil forces of scientific progress, or it may immediately blaze forth into a great trail of the fire of purification extending all over the land of Hindustan, and destroying in its flames all that is injurious to the prosperity and happiness of the people.

After the initiation of Mahatmaji's movement the Government of India have also suddenly begun to display great concern for the uplift of the peasantry of India. At first the solicitude of the Government for rural improvement was obviously a political move to counteract the anti-government feelings which the activities of the Indian National Congress were supposed to create in the countryside. Strategy rather than the

desire for the amelioration of the condition of the people was the motive force behind the action of the Government, in setting apart, for the first time in the history of the British Indian administration, a crore of rupees for rural uplift; and in impressing upon their officers the importance which the Government attached to their personal contact with and interest in the affairs of the rural population. In the ordinary circumstances, the rural uplift movement of the Government, after going through varying phases of importance and neglect, according as the influence of the Congress in the countryside was waxing or waning, would have fizzled out in a few years time, as has been the usual fate of all the beneficent activities of the Indian Government. But it appears that, Mahatmaji chose an auspicious moment for the inauguration of his rural movement. For, whereas, in the sphere of his political activities, he never met with anything but official opposition, bluff, and chicanery; in his rural activities, he has found in the Viceroy an ally, and a friend of the cause of the peasantry of India.

His Excellency the Viceroy within a short time of his arrival in India created such a great impression among the rural population about his understanding of their problems, and the sincerity and genuineness of his desire to help them, as perhaps no previous Viceroy was ever able to do. His Excellency's acts, such as the gift of a few pedigree bulls to rural areas, or the distribution of some milk to poor children may appear

insignificant, and hardly worthy of the personal interest of the Viceroy who, by tradition and usage, should interest himself only in great affairs of State, and not whether or not women and children in the villages get any milk to drink. It is customary in European countries for monarchs and high officers of state, to keep themselves acquainted with, and to show personal interest in the economic and social conditions of their people. But Pomp, Pageantry and Power are the only attributes of Kingship, that are supposed to impress the orientals; and accordingly nothing but harshness and severity have generally been dealt out to the people of India by officials of all ranks. It is, therefore, the inauguration of a new and happy era, and a strange experience for the people of India, to find their economic and social conditions becoming subjects of earnest official interest and enquiry.

It must not, however, be supposed that any tangible results of His Excellency the Viceroy's genuine desire to better the condition of the rural population of India are yet visible, or will necessarily appear. Uptil now most of the official solicitude for rural uplift has been of a nature designed to catch public imagination rather than to do any public good; and even now it will be sometime before the personal interest of the Viceroy penetrates through the strong intrenchment of official autocracy and callousness, and produces any results favourable to the rural population. Moreover, all official activity at best aims at improving the condition

of the people by increasing the production from land. As has already been shown, the cultivator gets only ten to twelve per cent of the produce; and even if an all round increase of ten per cent in the produce of the soil should be achieved, as a result of improvements in the methods of cultivation, which is almost impossible, the actual benefit to the cultivator will be quite insignificant.

However, rural uplift has been for sometime the great craze of the Indian official world. Right from the Viceregal Palace to the habitations of the village Patwari and the village schoolmaster, and running through the central and provincial secretariats, Judges, chambers, collectorates, and even the dark and grim police stations, the air has been resounding with the echoes of 'Rural Uplift' which the broadcasting stations of the government have multiplied a millionfold every evening. Indeed the very intensity and suddenness of the official solicitude for the welfare of the rural population, so far attended with little or no practical results, have made the public suspicious about the genuineness of official professions. Even the Viceroy and his government have not escaped some criticism.

Thus from the Statesman:—"It has been suggested that Lord Linlithgow's practical interest in our agricultural problems is only an effort to short circuit agitation, and to sidetrack political energies that might otherwise embarrass his government. We are told, that the dust of the farms is thus to be thrown in the

people's eyes as an opiate for the masses, so that they may no longer bother about the 'struggle for freedom' but look upon Government through rosy spectacles. And the allegation is double-edged, since it implies that hitherto the Government has been oblivious of its responsibility to agriculture, and has only now woken up because it wants some camouflage for the Reforms."

Such criticism of the Viceroy is ill-informed and ungenerous. His little pamphlet entitled 'The Indian Peasant' which was published many years before he became the Viceroy, is well worth a study by anyone, and certainly by the doubters of his sincerity. But in spite of the personal interest and feelings of the Viceroy for the welfare of the peasants of India, most of the official work in connection with the Rural Uplift is still a farce. A satire appeared in an English Periodical which is illustrative of the sum and substance of the official activities for the welfare of the peasantry.

An Emperor of China as he was viewing the landscape and inhaling agricultural odours, caught sight of a man shedding tears as he moved about his work in the fields. The Emperor sent for the man and enquired from him the cause of his grief. The man smiting his bosom with one hand, and pouring dust on his head with the other, replied that his hens had entered into a conspiracy to lay small eggs.

The Emperor enquired of his Chancellor if he could assign any reason for this anti-Social act of the hens. The Chancellor did not know, and enquired from

the man if any Government official had visited his farm; to which the latter replied that famine, pestilence, hook-worm, bots, and blind staggers, had all visited his farm, but not Government officials.

"That is doubtless the reason for your misfortune," replied the Chancellor. "If your Majesty approves, I shall obtain expert advice from the appropriate department, and the sorrowing man will cut inexperienced but whole-hearted capers, when his hens vie with the ostrich, if not with the roc".

The peasant was then dismissed and the Chancellor hurried to institute enquiries. An interval of time then passed, and at its expiry, the Chancellor was questioned by the Emperor as to what steps had been taken to increase the size of the eggs laid by the hens of the peasant.

"An additional pagoda has been built" replied the Chancellor "called Conference. In this the experts of the Department dispute day and night".

"Why?" asked the Emperor.

"They desire to settle the question which came first the hen or the egg", replied the Chancellor. "They feel that it is necessary to get down to first principles, and the zeal of the speakers is only equalled by the smoothness of their dictions and the richness of their metaphors. Moreover the lower or the practical branch of the Department has not been idle. Monographs have been prepared, and a work in twelve volumes entitled, "An introduction to the study of the

egg", is even now being taken from farm to farm, where official lecturers, specially chosen for their beautifully modulated voices, read extracts from it to the farmers, in the pauses which fatigue often imposes in the course of the day's agricultural operations. Charmingly tinted representations of eggs, large and small; executed by the distinguished hands of the Departmental experts, have been circulated to all the peasants in order that they may know the correct size of the egg to expect."

"Let us visit the peasant", said the Emperor.

Accordingly they proceeded to the farm of the man. The farmyard was crowded with officials and lecturers, through whom the man weeping loudly forced a passage.

"How now, my poor fellow?" said the Emperor, "Are your eggs still small?"

"No your Majesty," sobbed the man, "The unfortunate fowls are so incommoded by the throng of the lecturers and officials that they have no room to lay eggs at all".

An additional Pagoda was opened by His Excellency The Viceroy at Delhi some years ago where departmental experts dispute day and night, as they feel it necessary to get down to first principles for the purpose of promoting, guiding, and co-ordinating agricultural research throughout India, and for linking it with agricultural research in other parts of the British Empire and in foreign countries. Meanwhile,

the lower or the practical branches of the agricultural department are not remaining idle. They are issuing voluminous monographs on the hundred and one subjects into which agriculture can be sub-divided. And crowds of lecturers, specially chosen for their beautifully modulated voices, are roaming the entire countryside, demonstrating improvements to poor peasants, and completing the work which famine, pestilence, hookworm, bots, and blind staggers, besides the demands of the government and the landlords, and activities of foreign merchants and money-lenders had left undone among them. Hardly a week or a month passes in which a village is not honoured by the presence of some melodious voiced lecturer come on a mission of goodwill to the villagers, to teach them how to clean the insides and the fronts of their houses, to store manure outside the village, to fill up pits and puddles around wells, and to sweep village roads etc., etc.

Great stress is generally laid on the need of inculcating self-help, sanitary habits, and love of learning among the people. These are indeed highly laudable sentiments. But how many generations of officials in India have repeated similar noble sentiments and have undertaken similar laudable work of rural uplift, and have failed? And they have failed not because the peasant is unwilling or slow to take advantage of any practicable suggestions for improving his condition, but because the lip sympathy, stupid schemes, and expensive palliatives which the Government have always

applied to the solution of the greatest problem of Indian life, are utterly inadequate to effect any improvement in the condition of the peasant.

As Lord Linlithgow remarked in his pamphlet:—

"It must not be supposed that the peasant is unduly conservative in his attitude towards improvement brought to his notice. Only demonstrate to him that such an improvement is worth his while and he will readily introduce it. Cautious he must be, for he has no margin of resources, with which to finance unremunerative experiments. And where a peasant has already borrowed—and almost certainly overborrowed—at a rate of interest of say, 17 per cent, it is not the cultivator who is ill-advised in rejecting some improvement or other promising no more than a 6 per cent return on its cost. In cases of that kind, it is the adviser who is stupid and not the farmer."

Broadcasting on rural subjects forms a prominent part of the daily programmes of Indian radio stations. The principal feature of the daily rural programmes was sometime a dialogue between what were supposed to be representative types of an Indian townsman and a villager. It was difficult to say which of the two was intended to show himself a bigger idiot; but certainly they vied with each other in showing utter ignorance of the most simple matters connected with the daily town and village life. However, with all his ignorance, the villager had unbounded love for knowledge and unlimited store of perseverance, because in the pursuit

of knowledge he was not afraid to expose his ignorance of everything pertaining to this earth, and he never failed to pay his daily visit to the radio station, lest the remaining three hundred and fifty million villagers of India should be deprived of the words of wisdom which his searching questions drew out from the town oracle.

Habits of self-help, cleanliness, and love of learning which the rural activities of officials are apparently intended to inculcate among the rural population, are always the effect and never the cause of economic prosperity of any people. As Father Verrier Elwin, who spent some years in the Satpura mountains in the Central Provinces, said in one of his broadcast talks from Delhi, that the lives of Indian villagers are dominated by *fear and hunger*. Fear compasses them like a blazing forest fire. They are at odds with the whole world. The unseen gods are hostile to them. Their lives are shadowed by witches, landlords, ghosts, tax-collectors, and the money-lenders, and they always dream of them. They are anxious about the weather, their crops, their debts. In their system of dream interpretation, the tiger represents the creditor, the bear stands for the government official, and crocodile symbolizes the landlord. Through the long dark nights these creatures pursue them in fantastic nightmares. The greatest need of the Indian villager is the freedom from fear. You must give the villager something to live for; you must create in him the desire for a fuller, richer life. A certain Bishop was once talking to Dr. Samuel Johnson about the

poor. They get quite torpid, he said for want of property. And Johnson replied, "They have no object for hope, their condition cannot be better. It is rowing without a port. There is the very heart of our Problem". It is no good sending out your vaccinator if the villagers rub off the serum directly his back is turned. It is no good increasing the villagers wealth if it is to be taken away by the tax-collector, the landlord, and the village bania or his compeer abroad. You cannot persuade a man to keep poultry so long as he knows that the neighbours will steal his hens.

So our rural reconstruction work can only reconstruct the rural life of India, if the major portion of the produce of industry of the villagers were to remain within the villages to feed, clothe, and house them, and to provide sanitation, education, and other comforts and amenities of civilized life for them. The present systems of taxation, absentee landlordism, and ruinous large scale manufactures and foreign trade of the country, do not leave even sufficient food in the villages for the poorest subsistence of the tillers of the soil and their families, and for proper upkeep of their cattle. In the absence of sufficient food, even the questions of proper clothing and proper housing seldom arise with the villagers of India. Therefore, sanitation and education are subjects which cannot interest half-starved people, clothed in rags and living in wretched hovels without ventilation or air, or living in the open air and exposed to the inclemencies of the wind and weather. Air and

water are free gifts of nature; but the usual lot of an Indian villager is to inhale the contaminated air of dung heaps, and to drink the stagnant water of dirty village ponds.

No doubt, under the impetus of the Viceroy's personal interest for improvements of methods of cultivation and increase in the produce of the soil, considerable scientific research and practical advance will be made in the domain of agriculture. But the improvements in the methods of cultivation and increase in the produce of the soil will be of no avail to the majority of the Indian villagers. It will be to them like keeping poultry, when the fowl and eggs are to be stolen by others. In the province of the Punjab alone, from one crore acres of canal irrigated lands, crops of the value of about forty crores of rupees are annually raised. All or most of this wealth, which is fully half of the total annual produce of the Punjab, may be taken as net addition to the produce of the province within the last seventy or eighty years. And yet, whereas, the annual wealth of the province has doubled within this short period, and the population has only gone up by about forty-five per cent, the economic condition of the people is much worse off today than it was before the British occupation of the Punjab.

It is, therefore, not the allotment of a few lacs of rupees for each province for rural uplift by the Government of India, or the efforts and propaganda of district officials, or even the inculcation of habits,

thrift and industry among the people, that will effect appreciable improvements in the economic condition of the rural population of India. Thrift and industry of any people can only help to increase the produce of their labour. But what is required in the present conditions of Indian rural life is not so much an increase in the produce of labour, as is the retention or preservation for the benefit of the village people themselves of a substantial portion of what is being already produced. And this can only be achieved by fundamentally changing the system of taxation of agricultural produce, by discouraging absentee landlordism, and by making drastic alterations in the proportions of distribution of the produce between the landlords and the cultivators, and above all, by discouraging to the limit of prohibition, if necessary, large scale manufactures and foreign trade, and encouraging such handicrafts and industries as will have the effect of making villages or groups of villages self-contained economic units. //

A highly interesting article entitled 'Chinese Farmers' which appeared in the *Statesman* sometime ago affords in Chinese conditions of farming, village economy, and land taxation, etc., a very close parallel to Indian conditions. Two of the most ancient and very rich countries, cradles of all the arts and civilizations of the world, and holding within themselves nearly half the human population of the globe; having passed through similar phases of evolution, attained to similar heights of fabulous wealth and glory, been overrun

generation after generation by countless hordes of savage and nomad tribes, and having emerged unchanged and unharmed through vicissitudes of ages, India and China, besides being subjected to a highly injurious system of land taxation and tyranny of parasitic landlordism, are now in the grips of the most terrible pests of all times, namely western manufactures, trade and civilization, and are confronted with the supreme problem of saving themselves from their ruinous effects. The effects of the exploitation of India and China, in fact of all the eastern countries, by western nations, among whom for our present purposes of discussion, Japan must also be included, are far more ruinous to the economies of the eastern countries than even the excessive demands of their governments, or the exactions of their landlords; so the first fundamental condition for the progress of the eastern countries is the suppression of their trade with the western countries.

Luckily for China, India and other countries of the east, the inroads of western civilization, although they have made considerable havoc in large towns and places of industry, have not yet seriously affected them in their most vital part, namely the village life. It is still possible to say of the Chinese village, and with somewhat lesser force of the Indian village, that, "It is indeed astonishing to note how few are the articles in any village home which have not been made by the farmer himself, or by his neighbour in the next village." Industrialization brings to the farmers' door a number

of petty luxuries, and offers him opportunities of falling into bad ways. But until very recently, the Indian farmer, consciously or unconsciously, generally avoided these opportunities, and even now he is not much given to petty luxuries which mill manufactures offer him. This abstinence of the farmer is generally ascribed to his extreme poverty. Be that as it may; it is certainly the greatest feature in eastern life, and this it is which has hitherto preserved India from the chaos and anarchy of industrialism, and which, may yet help her out of her present deplorable condition, to shine once more in the firmament of greatness and glory.

TRADE AND MANUFACTURES—I

The ancient Hindus, who held agriculture supreme, and ranked manufactures, trade, service, and beggary, in the descending order of importance, have left such a sound maxim for the guidance of men that its neglect by people, at any stage of civilization and condition of their wealth, is sure to be attended by misery. Small states surrounded by rich countries, like cities and towns in any large country, may continue to flourish for considerable periods almost exclusively on the prosperity of their trade and manufactures, until the inconstant riches, which never reside permanently in any one place, should forsake their previous homes to find abodes elsewhere. But history records of no single instance, with the exception of perhaps Great Britain, in which a large country has even attempted to build up her prosperity, strength, and greatness, on the transitory wealth of manufactures and commerce. Germany aspired to build up her greatness on, or rather to augment her importance, by means of commercial wealth; but before the structure had been reared to any great height, it came down with a crash, leaving the Germans to extricate themselves from the ruins and debris, as best as they might. Fortunately, however, for the Germans, they could not industrialize

their entire country, so they were not utterly destroyed by the crash; and helped by their great agricultural and industrial resources, they quickly emerged from the ruin and chaos of the Great War. But the lesson of the Great War appears to have been lost on them, as they have again thrown a challenge to the entire world on the strength of their industrial greatness and are heading for ruin. The British also, in their obsession of triumph, and in false imitation of the Americans, after the War, expended all their own and borrowed resources in raising up an enormous industrial super-structure on their narrow strip of country; till before this war, they were looking down in terror from its giddy heights, whilst their less ambitious neighbours, the French and others, were enjoying their well-deserved felicity in the happy combination of agricultural and industrial prosperity.

The dazzling riches of western nations, acquired by means of manufactures and trade during the last two centuries, and their own increasing poverty, seem to have shaken the faith of Indians in the wisdom of the maxim left by their ancients; and they too, in imitation of the British, have lately made considerable effort and agitation for the extension and establishment of large manufactures in India, and for the improvement of their foreign trade and commerce. The British, for their own selfish reasons, have spared no pains to inculcate the belief amongst Indians that the economic regeneration of their poverty-stricken masses could only

be achieved by the increase of manufactures and foreign trade of the country. To keep up the ambition of Indians for their industrial and commercial progress at a high pitch, they have been continually dinning into them that, although luckily India already occupies the eighth place among the great industrial countries of the world, and although her foreign trade has already increased very greatly within the last few years, there is still great scope for improvements in both these respects. The benefits to the masses of the growth of commercial and industrial wealth of India, as the publicity officers of the government tell us, are already visible in the extension of the use of cigarettes, aerated waters, and other amenities of modern life to the villages; so there could be no doubt of still greater benefits accruing to the masses by greater and more rapid growth of India's manufactures and foreign trade. Indians have been further strengthened in their delusion of the power of manufactures and foreign trade to enrich countries and peoples, by the example of Japan, and nearer home, by the example of the mill-owners of Bombay and the Marwari and Sindhi communities; who grew rapidly rich after they took to manufactures and commerce as their principal occupations. But, although, they all talk of manufactures and commerce as great wealth producing organizations; neither the Government, who from their position of vantage and authority, propagate these false notions regarding the power of manufactures and commerce, nor their Indian advocates who

are apprehensive of India's economic ruin in the slightest decline of her trade figures, ever deign to explain in what manner their growth can enrich India.

In the confusion wrought by the false official propaganda on behalf of the capitalists of Great Britain, and the efforts of the Indian capitalists to attach unreal importance to manufactures and foreign trade, we seem to lose sight of the obvious fact that growing riches of the western nations during the last two centuries, synchronized with our own increasing poverty; so that those people grew rich not by creating wealth, but by extracting wealth from the weaker people, by inroads and tactics which the weaker people understood imperfectly, and even if they did understand them, they had not the power to resist them. They say that the discovery of America, and the discovery of a passage to the East Indies were the two greatest events in human history. Yes! those were the greatest events in human history from the European point of view, as they brought untold riches to the European countries. They laid bare to the insatiable greed of Europeans vast countries of fertile lands of the New World, and fabulous wealth of the ancient and rich countries of the old world. To say that those discoveries, by opening up new and almost inexhaustible markets for European goods gave occasion to European countries for the perfection of the division of labour, machinery, and tools, and for the accumulation of large stocks, by which they grew rich by fair and honest means, would be to give

organized plunders of the weaker people by Europeans, the name of fair trade.

The saying that War is robbery and Commerce is cheating, ~~was never better exemplified than in the political and commercial dealings of European nations with Indians and other eastern peoples.~~ The devices of monopolies and prohibitions which Europeans adopted in their many new colonies, were anything but free and fair trade. The methods which the Dutch in their colonies, and the British East India Company in their Indian provinces adopted for suppressing agriculture and industry of the natives of those countries, in order to promote their own manufactures and trade, are too painful and too well known to need detailed mention here. In their spice islands, the Dutch used to burn all the spiceries beyond what they expected to dispose of in the European markets at their own prices and profits. Even in the islands where they had no settlements, they paid heavy sums to the natives, to destroy young blossoms and leaves of young spice plants which grew there wild. As Adam Smith remarked with indignation:—

‘Even in the islands where they have no settlements they have very much reduced, it is said, the number of those trees. If the produce even of their own islands was much greater than what suited their market, the natives, they suspect, might find means to convey some part of it to other nations; and the best way, they imagine, to secure their own monopoly, is to take care

that no more shall grow than what they carry to market. By different arts of oppression, they have reduced the population of several of the Moluccas nearly to the number which is sufficient to supply with fresh provisions and other necessities of life, their own insignificant garrisons and such of their ships as occasionally come there for a cargo of spices. The English Company have not yet had time to establish in Bengal so perfectly destructive a system. The plan of their government, however, has had exactly the same tendency. It has not been uncommon, I am well assured, for the chief, that is, the first clerk of a factory, to order a peasant to plough up a rich field of poppies and sow it with rice or some other grain. The pretence was to prevent scarcity of provisions; but the real reason was to give the chief an opportunity of selling at a better price a large quantity of opium which he happened then to have upon hand. Upon other occasions the order has been reversed; and a rich field of rice or other grain has been ploughed up, in order to make room for a plantation of poppies, when the chief foresaw that extraordinary profit was likely to be made of opium."

They employed equally violent means to suppress Indian industries. I have already referred to the methods which their commercial agents employed to compel weavers to prepare exclusively for themselves certain quantities of given qualities of fabrics, and forced them to accept whatever prices for the work they chose to give. For non-performance or unsatisfactory

performance of their work, peons were posted at the houses of weavers, they were subjected to humiliation and torture, and their utensils and other little belongings were attached and sold off. Furthermore, the British imposed prohibitive tariffs on imports of Indian goods into their territory, and imported their own goods into India duty free. In the words of H. H. Wilson:—"It is also a melancholy instance of the wrong done to India by the country on which she has become dependent. It was stated in evidence (in 1813) that the cotton and silk goods of India, upto the period, could be sold for a profit in the British market at a price from 50 to 60 per cent lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 to 80 percent on their value, or by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped at the outset and could scarcely have been again set in motion, even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufacture. Had India been independent she would have retaliated, would have imposed prohibitive duties upon British goods, and would then have preserved her own productive industry from annihilation. This act of self-defence was not permitted her; she was at the mercy of the stranger. British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty, and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep

down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms."

Writing of the Christian colonial system W. Howitt says:—

'The barbarities and desperate outrages of the so-called Christian race, throughout every region of the world, and upon every people they have been able to subdue, are not to be paralleled by those of any other race, however fierce, however untaught, and however reckless of mercy and of shame, in any age on the earth. The history of the colonial administration of Holland, the model capitalist nation of the seventeenth century, is one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre and meanness'.

Again Karl Marx writing of the rise of the western commerce and trade says: "Under the influence of the colonial system, commerce and navigation ripened like hothouse fruit. Chartered companies were powerful instruments in promoting the concentration of capital. The colonies provided a market for the rising manufactures, and the monopoly of this market intensified accumulation. The treasures obtained outside Europe by direct looting, enslavement, and murder, flowed to the motherland in streams, and were there turned into Capital. Holland, the first country to develop the colonial system to the full, had attained the climax of its commercial greatness as early as the year 1648. It was in almost exclusive possession of the East India trade, and of the commerce between the south-east and the

north-west of Europe. Its fisheries, its mercantile marine, and its manufactures surpassed those of any other country. The total capital of the republic probably exceeded that of all the rest of Europe put together. At the same time the common people of Holland were more overworked, more impoverished, and more brutally oppressed than those of all the rest of Europe put together." The same writer says about the East India Company:—"The English East India Company, as is well known, was not only politically supreme in India, but had an exclusive monopoly of the tea trade as of the China trade generally, and of the transport of goods to and from Europe. But the coasting trade of India, was a monopoly of the higher officials of the Company. The monopolies of salt, opium, betel, and other wares were inexhaustible mines of wealth. The officials fixed the prices at their own sweet will, and fleeced the unhappy Hindus unmercifully. The Governor-General took part in this private traffic. His favourites received contracts under conditions which enabled them, since they were cleverer than the alchemists, to make gold out of nothing. Great fortunes sprang up like mushrooms, primary accumulation going ahead without the original output of so much as a shilling. The report of the impeachment of Warren Hasting is peppered with instances. Here is one. A contract for opium was given to a certain Sullivan, when he was just setting out on an official mission to a part of India remote from the districts where opium

was grown. He therefore sold his contract to a man named Binn for £40,000. The same Binn re-sold his contract for £60,000. The second buyer who actually carried out the contract, deposed that he had made vast profits. According to a list laid before Parliament, the Company and its employees received £6,000,000 from the natives of India as gifts between 1757 and 1766. In the years 1769 and 1770, the English brought about a famine by buying up all the rice, and by refusing to sell it again except at fabulous prices."

Again the same writer says:—"With the development of the capitalist production in the manufacturing period, the public opinion of Europe had lost the last vestige of shame and conscience. The nations bragged cynically of every infamy which could serve as a means for the accumulation of capital."

The military occupation of north China by Japan some years ago and her commercial dealings with her, and the still more recent outrageous war of Japan on China, and then the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy, by the most inhuman and barbarous methods of warfare, show that the twentieth century capitalists are as devoid of shame, conscience, and humanity, as were their predecessors of the earlier days of the manufacturing period.

Thus, industrial and commercial riches were not acquired by the European nations by fair and honest trade; nor can India, without any power to force Indian goods on the outside world, on terms advantageous to

herself, make other people to part with their wealth for articles of Indian manufacture. Japan acquired a spell of industrial and commercial prosperity from a combination of several causes, which cannot operate in the case of a country of the position and size of India. Her independent and strong military position, her comparatively small size, her large and rich neighbouring markets of China, India, and America, her own agricultural wealth in addition to her possession of large, rich, and fertile colonies in China, the industrious, frugal, and thrifty habits of her people, and in consequence low wages of her workers, all contributed to the rapid growth of commerce and industries of Japan. Artificial tastes for European goods already existed among the Chinese, Indians, and other Asiatic and colonial peoples. And as with almost equal proficiency and skill in manufactures, very much lower wages of their workers than those of the English or Americans, and great encouragement from their Government, the Japanese could manufacture and sell goods much cheaper than the British or the Americans; Japan, before entering into her present troubles, got possession of some of the eastern and colonial markets. With the acquisition of large markets and great commerce, Japan also built up a great mercantile marine, which was performing excellent service in almost all the waters of the world. But even her industrial prosperity has been endangered; and when Japan loses some more of her markets, as she has already done to a considerable

extent, there will be nothing for her people, but to curtail their manufactures and shipping, and seek refuge in agricultural occupations. However, as Japan is a small country, with very large colonies in China, and her markets are extensive and rich, and she does not exclusively trade with any one market, and above all the wages of her workers are low, it is quite possible that she may continue to be an important manufacturing and trading country in the East for many years yet, if she survives the present struggle.

Some venturesome people imagine, that labour in India being so very cheap, much cheaper than it is even in Japan, they could develop manufactures in India to such an extent, as to outdo the western nations and the Japanese in manufacturing various articles of comfort and luxury; and be able to sell those articles to outside countries at an advantage, as the Japanese have been doing. This notion arises from the erroneous supposition that, manufacturing labour, or skilled labour as they call it, is intrinsically superior to agricultural labour; and that, if Indians could manufacture articles of comfort and luxury cheaply, some people would always be found to exchange their wealth for Indian manufactures to India's advantage. The fact that several western nations, and the British above all, have been living in great luxury and wealth by following the highly paying occupations of manufactures and trade, depending for their food and materials of manufactures on the so-called backward races, should not

mislead us, as I have tried to explain, as to the intrinsic superiority of the manufacturing over agricultural labour. By a series of accidents, they got it into their power to compel or coax the weaker peoples to take their manufactured articles, representing small amounts of objectified labour time of their men, in exchange for large quantities of food and materials of manufactures, representing immense expenditure of human labour of those peoples. Thus, their dull operators of machines came to be called skilled workers, and acquired superiority over the intelligent and resourceful workers in the fields. But this circumstance should not determine true relative values of the two kinds of labour; for even among the industrial nations of Europe, agricultural wages are in no way inferior to the wages of artisans and mechanics. Therefore, even granting that Indians could excel or outdo the western people in manufacturing industries, there will be no people willing or able to exchange the work of large numbers of their own intelligent and useful labour, for the work of a few dull Indian workmen and mechanics.

But as it is, happily for India, there is no likelihood of India ever excelling or even equalling the western people in manufacturing industries. By generations of continued work in manufacturing industries, and by the introduction of complicated mechanical appliances, they have acquired such great skill and proficiency in their work that they can turn out enormous quantities of manufactured goods without much expenditure of

human labour. Taking the well-known example of modern textile industry we find that although the cost of Indian mill labour is only a fraction of the cost of Lancashire labour, and although, in addition, the Indian mill industry is protected by heavy import duties on textiles, yet English textile goods of finer counts, with freight, duty, and other heavy charges added to them, have always been sold to advantage in the Indian market. The Japanese seem to possess some manufacturing miracle because, in spite of the extremely heavy charges on Japanese goods, they have always sold textiles in India almost at the prices of raw cotton. Thus it will perhaps never be that Indian mills will produce textiles on equal terms with Lancashire or Japan.

A very good estimate of the efficiency of Indian textile operatives, working on the most modern mill machinery, can be made from the following extracts of a speech made by Sir Hormusji Mehta, Indian Employers Delegate to the Independent Labour Conference held at Geneva sometime before the War, in opposing the Draft-convention for a forty hour week in the mills.

'The conditions in India are quite different from those which prevail over here on the western side of Europe. The industry is far better organized in this part of the world, inasmuch as in a given cotton mill, of say, 30,000 spindles, and 500 looms, if the western countries employ 300 people, we employ as many as 1,200 people for the same number of spindles and looms, that is to say, we are working under such a disadvantage

that our ratio is one to four."

Sir Hormusji went on to say:—

'We are absolutely positive that it would be against the interest of the labourers to reduce the time to 40 hours. By reducing the time they will produce a less quantity of finished goods. The employers will not be able to pay them more or even keep up the standard of living by paying an equal amount of money for the lower production. Thirdly a lesser quantity of raw materials will be consumed in the mills, and therefore the men producing smaller amount of cotton cloth will have to sell it at a much lower price, and that will adversely affect the whole agricultural population; and you must remember that the population of India consists of up to 90 per cent of agricultural labourers. The workmen in the factories are next to nothing compared with that huge population. They represent about 2 per cent or at the most $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the whole population of 350 million people. Therefore, it is not in the interests of the labourers to have these hours reduced."

He proceeded in the same woeful strain to describe how Japan could produce finished cotton goods with imported cotton from Bombay, at 5d per lb. which was then the price of raw cotton in Bombay; how the efficiency of the Indian workmen must remain low as the various communities inhabiting India observe different holidays, and the mills have to be kept closed for all holidays; how the mill industry in India was in a bad way; 6,000,000 spindles and twenty to thirty

thousand looms having been scrapped within the previous three or four years; and finally how, in the interest of standard of living of the workers, it would go far more against the workers, than the employers, to reduce the hours of working.

All this jumble of arguments and solicitude of Sir Hormusji for the Indian mill workers, in order to keep long working hours for them were nothing more than extremely poor attempts at imitating the much cleverer English mill owners of the previous generation, who, in opposing the reduction of working hours of the mill workers, always tried to prove that the slightest reduction of the working hours would not only ruin the industry of England, but would also be destructive of the health and moral of the people, as it would leave them more leisure for dissipation and doing mischief. Sir Hormusji went one step further than any of his predecessors of England, by pleading for long working hours, because he stated that the atmosphere inside the Indian mills was highly oppressive and injurious to human health; and yet insisted that the worker must remain inside the mills for as long as possible to inhale the poisonous air.

But all the same it is an established fact that the efficiency of Indian mill workers is very low compared to the efficiency of the workers of the western countries, not only in the cotton mills, but in all other mill industries. Moreover, among themselves, the manufacturing countries of Europe, America, and Japan, have

been engaged all these years in outdoing one another in cheaper and greater production of manufactured goods; so that before the outbreak of War all the markets were glutted with manufactured articles, and on account of their very great abundance, most people in addition to the lack of means to buy them, had lost taste for them, as children will lose taste for toys, of which they have had too many. The frequent exhibitions and great advertisement and propaganda which the various rival manufacturing countries were indulging in for the sale of their goods, together with the colossal unemployment in manufacturing countries, should have opened up our eyes, that manufactures were already in a bad way; and that their unreal superiority over agricultural occupations will disappear long before Indians could possibly acquire any great proficiency in them. The wise men and politicians of Great Britain, as of all other manufacturing countries, were engaged between the two wars in devising means for cajoling or compelling other people to buy their goods; but they did not succeed in finding a solution of the unemployment problem by these means.

After the impetus given to industries by the War is over, the wages and numbers of manufacturers, artists, and other pleasure dealers, must come down to what can be conveniently supported by the producers of human food, after satisfying their own requirements liberally; and then only, a stable equilibrium between manufactures and agriculture will be established, in place of

the present chaos in the economy of the world. The deciding factor in the relative values of manufacturing and agricultural labour will not be the skilfulness of either kind of labour, although the superiority of skill is decidedly on the side of agricultural labour; but it will be as to which of the two kinds of labour is of greater value to human welfare. No people in the world if they are free to exercise their own independent judgment, will attach greater importance to manufacturing than to agricultural labour; and as people will not be much longer prevented from exercising their independent judgment, manufacturing labour must recede more and more into the background in future. Not only, therefore, Indians cannot derive any advantage by acquiring great proficiency in manufactures, but even the manufacturing countries of Europe must, after the War, drive back large numbers of workers from manufacturing industries, and must lower the wages of their industrial labour nearly to the level of the wages of agricultural workers in their markets.

By this I do not mean that the wages of English workers will come down to the level of wages of agricultural labour prevailing in India; although in the processes of the revival of prosperity of Indian agriculture and industries, and decline of English manufactures, the recompense of labour in India must go up somewhat, and that of English labour must come down, tending to lesser inequalities in their conditions than exist at present. What, however, I mean is that the very great inequality

that has always existed in the recompense of Indian and English labour, makes it extremely undesirable that extensive trade should subsist between the two countries as long as such inequality lasts. After the War the English will have to depend for their foreign trade mostly on the dominions, who alone will be in a real position to purchase English manufactured goods in exchange for their goods and raw materials. I believe an equality already exists in the recompense of agricultural labour of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc. and the industrial labour of Great Britain; so extensive trade between Great Britain and the dominions cannot be oppressive to the dominions, as it certainly must always be to India.

Real and honest trade is only exchange of objectified labour time for labour time. Trade on any other basis is dishonesty and fraud. Human labour, in free and fair trade between any two countries, must be very much on a footing of equality; and should there be any reason for an advantage to one party, it should legitimately be to those who produce food and necessities, and not those who cater to freaks and fancies of men. In the present state of political and economic subjection of India there can be no hope of establishing honest trade between England and India, so it should be the duty and endeavour of every Indian to discourage trade between these two countries.

TRADE AND MANUFACTURES—II

Commerce and industries have never been in any age, legitimate means of producing wealth, in any large country. These are like administration, defence, and other necessary institutions of civilized existence, maintained at very heavy expenditure of wealth, that is, of human food, by all large countries. Merchants, manufacturers, artisans, and carriers of goods and merchandise, who, like the administrators, soldiers, etc., do not produce a single grain of corn nor a blade of grass, must all consume food; and all their goods and merchandise and their ships and instruments of trade must necessarily be produced at the expense of immense quantities of human food. The only legitimate function of commerce is to facilitate exchange of surplus products of the industries of various countries, which the surplus wealth, that is surplus food of those countries, between which commerce is carried on, should enable their inhabitants to produce. The agents carrying on these important though expensive functions must subsist, and some of them subsist luxuriously, on food produced by others; just as administrators, soldiers, and officers of peace and justice must subsist, and a number of them subsist luxuriously on food produced by others. Thus, healthy commerce, manufactures, and industries of any

large country, must be proportional to the surplus food available for the maintenance of the non-productive, though useful merchants, manufacturers, etc., just as the expenses of administration and defence of any country, in a healthy state of administration, must be proportional to the surplus wealth available for the maintenance of the non-productive, though necessary and useful administrators, magistrates, and soldiers. Merchants, manufacturers, and artisans, by their acts facilitate and increase conveniences and luxuries of the people among whom their activities are carried on, just as administrators, magistrates and soldiers, by establishing peace and order, facilitate and increase the conditions under which the conveniences and luxuries procured by merchants can be best enjoyed. Otherwise, the greater the numbers of merchants, manufacturers, and artisans in any country, or as we would say, the more civilized any country, and more extensive its commerce and manufactures, the more expensive must their maintenance be to that country; just as the administration and defence of rich and civilized countries are necessarily more expensive than those of poor countries. The more hands through which a commodity passes, and greater the number and variety of the commodities produced in any country, that is, greater the commerce and manufactures of any country, the heavier must be the burden of those on that country. The introduction of steam into the propulsion of ships and railways, and the introduction of labour-saving machinery into various

manufactures, only reduce the expenses of commerce and manufactures, but these do not render commerce and industries productive of wealth, just as any processes of simplification of administration and defence of a country can only render them less expensive to the country, but cannot by any means make them productive of wealth.

There can be thus no large manufacturing and commercial countries exclusively, in a healthy and natural development of human society. The existence of exclusively large manufacturing and commercial countries only implies that they have abandoned their proper and exalted occupations of producers of human food, and have taken to the mean occupations of manufacturers, merchants, and professional entertainers. Accidently these manufacturing countries acquired political power over large colonies and rich countries. But this accidental ascendancy of the merchant and the manufacturer over the producers of food can neither be made an argument for the superiority of commerce and manufactures over agriculture, nor can it last a single day, after the producers of human food realize their own worth, and choose to withdraw their patronage from their dealers. That this unnatural superiority of merchants over their customers has lasted so long, is altogether owing to the fact that the real disposal of wealth, by unfair systems of taxation and distribution of the produce, has remained, not with the actual producers, but with their expensive trader rulers, and idle

landlords, who, not having worked to produce that wealth, have wasted it on needlessly expensive administration and defence, and on the acquisition of useless trumperies of foreign manufactures respectively. The producers of food are now growing restless at seeing their hard-earned bread thrown away to maintain a wasteful administration, and the luxury and indolence of their landlords, manufacturers, and merchants; and unless the wasteful government, indolent landlords, and clever manufacturers and merchants, take timely steps to satisfy the just demands of the producers of food, they and their civilization are doomed to be engulfed in the rising tide of hostility against their systems, which starve millions, so that a few clever people may live easy, slothful, and vicious lives.

Such being the real nature of manufacturing and mercantile occupations, and such the growing hostility against their unnatural prosperity, only fools will withdraw from the secure and honourable agricultural occupations to engage in the precarious and ill-liked occupations of manufactures and trade. In spite of the glamour and luxury of the Western nations, which we have been accustomed to see, their day is over. So, for any other people whom nature has blessed with good soil and happy climate, and who with industry and labour can raise two or three crops in the year, to strive to acquire the occupations and habits of the western people, is to climb the steep and unprotected hill of western glory, only to be blown off by the great gusts

of wind that are now blowing over their unprotected pinnacle of grandeur, where people are shivering from the sharp and unkindly winds that are piercing them. Their glamour is like the flood of light from a burning vessel which lits the horizon for a little while and then sinks down, leaving utter darkness and desolation behind. Shall we be attracted by the light of that fire, which has already consumed the best features of their religious, social, and moral lives, and is threatening to engulf their very existence in its burning flames, that have spread all over Europe and beyond. Great gifts of nature—beautiful countries, mild equable climates, and productive soils—have been all wantonly despised by the westerners, and achievements of man, that propel heavy loads with steam, make people fly like birds in the air, or transmit messages through space instantaneously—all wonderful but unproductive—have been exalted by them. Shall we follow their lead to despise the great and worship the wonderful? Wealth produced by manufactures and commerce is like the glittering pieces of silver and gold and other wonderful things produced by the juggler's tricks. Shall we run after those unrealities?

The great riches of manufacturing countries, were a passing phase in human history. As we see from the frequent life and death struggles between nations, riches acquired by manufactures and commerce could not be of real benefit to those peoples. The evil riches of Manufactures have never let their possessors to remain in

peace in their own homes, or to be on terms of friendship with their neighbours. Moreover as the corrupt practices of the manufacturing countries have become more and more exposed, and as the secrets of their superior powers and skill have been grasped by other people, the productivity of manufactures has been fast disappearing, and the alchemists of yesterday, who produced good out of nothing, will become the beggars of tomorrow, thrown entirely at the mercy of the producers of human food.

The words of Frederick Engles, which were true about England fifty years ago, are doubly true of the whole manufacturing world of today:—

“The time is rapidly approaching when a thorough examination of their economic position will impose itself as an irresistible necessity on the industrial nations of the world. The working of the industrial system, impossible without a constant and rapid extension of production, and therefore of markets, is coming to a dead stop. Free trade has exhausted its resources; even England has abandoned this, its quondam economic gospel. Foreign industry rapidly developing, stares production of old manufacturing countries in the face everywhere, not only in the protected but also in neutral markets. While the productive power increases in a geometric, the extension of markets proceeds at best in an arithmetic ratio. The decennial cycle of stagnation, prosperity, overproduction, and crises, ever recurrent since the beginning of mechanical industry, seems indeed

to have run its course; but only to land us in a slough of despond of a permanent and chronic depression. The sighed for period of prosperity will not come. As often as we seem to perceive its heralding symptoms, so often do they again vanish into air. Meanwhile, each succeeding winter brings up afresh the great question, 'what to do with the unemployed.' But while the number of unemployed keeps swelling from year to year, there is nobody to answer that question; and we can almost calculate the moment when the unemployed losing patience will take their own fate into their hands."

Meanwhile the great demoralizing and degrading effects, on the workers of industrial countries, of improvements in the methods of manufactures are proceeding apace, and are covering the entire civilized world. Seemingly, all mechanical improvements, by replacing human labour with the power of steam and electricity tend to relieve human beings of their harder tasks. But in reality the greatest inventions, and the widest applications of them in the spheres of production, have not perhaps lightened the toil of a single individual. The greater and greater productivity of labour has thrown increasing pressure on the means of employment, leading to overwork for some enforced idleness for others, and widespread poverty, overcrowding, and immorality for the entire working population of the world.

The meaning of true economics seems to have been

lost on the whole of the so-called civilized world. Aristotle contrasting "Economics" with "Chrematistics" (money-making) wrote:—

"In so far as economics are the art of gaining a livelihood, this art is restricted to procuring the things which are necessary for existence, and useful either to a household or the state. True wealth, consists of such use-values; for the quantity of possessions of this kind capable of making life pleasant, is not unlimited. There is, however, a second way of acquiring things, to which it is advantageous and right to give the name of chrematistics, in whose domain there seems to be no limit to riches and possessions. Trade (the word Aristotle uses means retail trade, and he uses that word because in retail trade use-values predominate) does not in its nature belong to chrematistics, for here exchange relates only to things necessary to the buyer and the seller." There he goes on to show that the original form of trade was barter, but as the practice of barter extended, money necessarily originated. With the discovery of money, barter perforce developed into trade, and this in contradistinction to its primary tendency became transformed into chrematistics, into the art of making money. Chrematistics are distinguished from economics by this, that for economics circulation is the source of wealth. And chrematistics appear to turn upon money, for money is the beginning and the end of this kind of exchange. Therefore, wealth, as chrematistics strive to attain it, is unlimited. Just as every

art that is not means to an end, but an end in itself, is unrestricted in its aim, whereas the arts that are merely pursued as means to an end are not unlimited, seeing that the aim itself imposes limits; so, for chrematistics there is no limit to their aim, seeing that their aim is absolute enrichment. Economics have a limit, but chrematistics have not. Economics aim at something different from money, whereas chrematistics aim at increasing money. By confounding these two forms which overlap one another, some have been led to look upon the preservation and increase of money to an infinite extent as the final aim of economics."

Enrichment of countries and nations at the expense of others, and not the perfection of arts and industries, which will provide livelihood to the people by means of exchange and barter of the products of the various arts and industries, is the ambition of all manufacturing nations of today. Money is the beginning and the end of all western economics. The wealth that they strive to attain is unlimited. In all previous ages too money makers have striven to acquire unlimited wealth. But the very processes of production, and restricted intercourse and commerce between nations, imposed limits both on the numbers of money makers and their ambitions. The majority of the people everywhere, both by necessity and choice, employed themselves in producing things necessary for the existence of and otherwise useful to man; and the money-making classes, howsoever rich they might grow, were always treated with

contempt and even with loathing. Now, improvements in the methods of production are ever more and more divorcing human labour from production, and things necessary for human existence and otherwise useful to man are being produced almost without the application of human labour and in unlimited quantities, and also there is enormous intercourse and commerce between different countries and nations. Thus, the previous limits on the numbers and ambitions of money-making classes have been obliterated, and whole nations are striving at absolute enrichment. No inferiority attaches to the money-making classes. They are all fools of gold, feverishly digging out gold from gold mines, and consigning it to secret vaults. It is impossible to see the difference between gold buried in mines, and gold consigned to secret vaults, except that gold lying in the vaults excites the cupidity of other nations, and provides incentive to them for aggression and war.

Gold in moderate quantities, or objectified human labour in any other universally recognized form, lends stability to society, as it enables people to tide over temporary unemployment, famine, or some other difficult situation. But large hoards of gold anywhere are an unmixed evil, troublesome and even dangerous to guard and protect, and a perpetual source of strife between the actual possessors of gold and those who have an eye to it.

"Of evils current upon earth, the worst is money. Money it is that sacks cities, and drives men forth from

hearth and home; warps and seduces native innocence, and breeds a habit of dishonesty."

More than three quarters of the gold of the world is said to be in the possession of America, and almost the entire output of gold has been flowing to America year after year. And if after the war there should be a revival of trade among nations, then perhaps not an ounce of gold will remain in the outside world. As a medium of circulation and exchange of commodities, gold no longer functions in the world, except occasionally in international exchanges. Even in the sphere of international trade, the volume of transactions is so great that payments in gold can only be made for an infinitesimally small proportion of the world's trade. In fact the continued severe trade depression that went on for ten years before the present war came, must almost entirely be attributed to the inability of most nations of the world to pay for their purchases in gold, instead of in the commodities of their production and manufactures. By clever, though short-sighted manipulations of rates of exchange, they managed to give some impetus to trade between different nations. But no real revival of trade was possible because all the trade of the world appeared to turn upon money, and not on the exchange of commodities. It is thus the miser's love of gold that brought the trade of the world to a stand-still!

"In order that gold may be kept in hand as money, and therefore as an element of hoard, it must be prevented from circulating, from transforming itself into

the means of enjoyment by being used to effect purchases. The miser, therefore, sacrifices his fleshly lusts to the fetish of gold. He takes the gospel of renunciation in right earnest. On the other hand he cannot withdraw from circulation in the form of money more than he has given to circulation in the form of commodities. The more he produces, the more he can sell. Diligence, thrift, and avarice, are therefore his cardinal virtues; to sell much and to buy little are his whole science of political economy." Marx.

It is thus 'Chrematistics' which has not only subverted the general outlook on life of the western people, and perverted their tastes and morals, but it has plunged the entire western world into chaos, by creating in them limitless ambition for the accumulation of wealth by means of trade, which has come to a standstill. With the loss of their trade, their colossal manufacturing plants and large populations have been working overtime for several years past, for turning out myriads of bombing planes, ships of war, and deadly gases, armaments, and missiles for the destruction of human life and property. Before the outbreak of the War almost everyday a fresh edict was issuing from the capitals of Europe for conscripting more and more men for military service and for perfecting their engines of destruction. The very inventions of the Europeans, which were originally devised by them to improve their means of livelihood, and were later used by them for hoarding wealth by cheating and robbing the simple eastern

people, at last came to be employed by America to denude Europe of all its accumulated riches. And Europeans, driven to desperation by their difficulties, and unable to strike at America, began feverishly to prepare to destroy one another. Only a little spark was wanting to set the whole of Europe ablaze. The Italo-Abyssinian war, the latest act of robbery by a European state against a peaceful and unoffending people, very nearly provided that spark. But the Italian victory over Abyssinia found Great Britain and others in a state of unpreparedness for war with Italy and her partizans, and general conflagration in Europe was avoided. The Spanish civil war later threatened to turn into a European conflict but that too passed off safely. Some other cause was wanting to ignite the powder magazine of Europe, and that cause, after a number of near misses, was provided by the ambitions of Hitler. It was clear for a long time that a great war, much more terrific than the last one could not long be avoided; and now that it has come, we can see by the enormities that are being committed, that unless some miracle happens, it will end by destroying European civilization root and branch. European civilization is a civilization of chrematistics; so by its destruction the rest of the world, and even Europe itself, will not be the losers. A new civilization not claiming supremacy over the rest of human kind, and not aiming at absolute enrichment of its people, but based on friendship and equality with the rest of the world, and free intercourse between the nations,

will take the place of the lost civilization. In this civilization people will not have to make underground citadels to protect their hoards of gold and themselves from the enemy's air bombardments, nor will they have to erect impregnable barriers to keep out from their lands men and goods of the neighbouring countries.

TRADE AND MANUFACTURES—III

The evil effects of the manufacturing system on the prosperity, lives, and morals of the people of industrial countries themselves are very great indeed. Mental and moral degradation of the working classes and callousness of the capitalists to their sufferings were the first fruits of industrialism in Great Britain and Europe. As Marx said:—"They (the capitalists) are no more moved by the prospect of the coming degeneration and final disappearance of the human race, than they are disturbed by the prospect that the earth may one day fall into the sun." They have no indulgence nor forbearance for the sick, the weak, the old, or woman's weakness. The wife, the daughter, and even the aged mother of the worker are all drawn into the great mesh of industrialism by the force of necessity; so that they must all forsake or neglect their home life, and must all work just to keep body and soul together.

The division of labour in manufactures altogether destroys the mental faculties of the workers. "The independent peasant or handicraftsman develops knowledge, insight and skill even though it be only to a moderate extent." But under the manufacturing system, all these faculties are suppressed, and the worker moves in one single rut performing some simple operations of

manufacture. As Adam Smith remarked:—

“The understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations has no occasion to exert his understanding. He generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become. His dexterity at his own particular trade seems in this manner to be acquired at the expense of his intellectual, social, and martial virtues; but in every improved and civilized society, this is the state into which the labouring poor, that is, the great body of the people, must necessarily fall.”

A. Ferguson, Adam Smith's teacher exclaimed about the evil effects of the division of labour:—‘We make a nation of helots and have no free citizens.’

The moral degradation of the manufacturing workers is even more complete than their mental degeneration. The tenements of the working classes are almost everywhere notoriously overcrowded; and in the words of an eminent doctor “overcrowding almost necessarily involves such negation of all delicacy, such unclean confusion of bodies and bodily functions, such exposure of animal and sexual nakedness, as is rather bestial than human. To be subject to these influences is a degradation which must become deeper and deeper for those on whom it continues to work. To children who are born under its curse, it must often be a very baptism into infamy. And beyond all measure hopeless

is the wish that persons thus circumstanced should ever in other respects aspire to that atmosphere of civilization which has its essence in physical and moral cleanliness."

As has been previously observed, "The poor and the idle are a necessary consequence of the rich and the active." Townsend, a High Church parson, glorified poverty as the necessary condition of wealth. "Legal constraint (to labour) is attended with too much trouble, violence, and noise; whereas hunger is not only peaceable, silent, and unremitted pressure, but as the most natural motive to industry and labour it calls forth the most powerful exertions. It seems to be a law of nature that the poor should be to a certain degree improvident, that there may always be some to fulfil the most servile, the most sordid, and the most ignoble offices in the community. The stock of human happiness is thereby much increased, whilst the more delicate are not only relieved from drudgery, but are left at liberty without interruption, to pursue those callings which are suited to their various dispositions."

On no less an authority than Adam Smith's we have just seen that in every civilized society the great body of the people must necessarily fall into a state of stupidity and ignorance; and yet, the wise men of Europe have not only been trying to perpetuate the manufacturing system of which the western civilization is the product, but they have even been trying to engraft their manufacturing system and civilization on

other 'less civilized' countries, of which unfortunately India happens to be one.

The usual talk of promoting friendly relations between Englishmen and Indians, and the favourite schemes of some simple and goodly souls, of creating a heaven upon earth, by evolving a new civilization out of what is best in the civilizations of the East and the West, are nothing more than hallucinations of unpractical persons. 'East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.' There can be nothing in common between the cold calculating and selfish materialism of the West, which keeps rigid accounts of the most trivial material transactions between husband and wife, father and son, and brother and sister; and loving sentimentalism of the east, which regards the whole village, the whole town, the whole country and even the whole world as one family, and derives happiness and sadness from the joys and sorrows of others. Selfishness, ungodliness, and lack of fellow-feeling—the direct offsprings of the money-making creed of Europeans—are the greatest traits of Western character, which Indians coming in contact with the Europeans sometimes imbibe. Therefore all that we can do to fraternize with westerners is to try to convert them to our ways, but nothing beyond it.

No doubt the English and other European nations may justly be proud of their great achievements in literature, arts, physical science, and works of engineering. But their achievements in literature and arts and

all that tends to enlighten the mind of man and to ennoble and soften human nature, date back to their forefathers, whose works are now consigned to musty bookshelves and neglected libraries. Their achievements in physical science and works of engineering are of the present age, and it is the misuse of these achievements which has led them on to the present European conflagration which threatens destruction, not of their own works, but even of the noble heritage of their forefathers.

Those who have visited England and other rich manufacturing countries before this War, and have gone about with open eyes, must have been struck by the poverty, suffering and helplessness of the millions of unemployed persons on the one hand, and nauseating luxuries and shameless disgusting ways of the pleasure seekers on the other. On the one hand the painful spectacles of legions of wretched and miserable men, women and children of the unemployed indicated that the wrath of the gods had descended on the peoples of Europe; and on the other hand, from the overcrowded places of amusements, pleasures, and dissipation everywhere in Europe, one would have thought that the people of Europe had gone crazy from excess of wealth, and men and women were pleasure hunting and eating and drinking all the time. Brutal overwork and poverty were the lot of one and by far the more numerous set of people; and idleness, luxury, and sickening debauchery were the rewards of the other set, under the

modern civilized methods of production and distribution of wealth.

Therefore anything done by India to suppress and curtail English manufactures and trade, will tend to strengthen and purify English life, as it will give English workers impetus and direction towards independent agricultural occupations and industries of home consumption and use, and will help to put a check to the wild and excessive pleasures of English men and women. The position of Great Britain, as of any other country, can never be so strong as when the majority of her population consist of honest workers who produce a substantial portion of their own food, and are principally employed in industries of home consumption. By their trading propensities, the British have drifted to a state of dangerous dependence on others, even for their very subsistence, till now a six weeks' blockade of Great Britain will be enough to starve the whole population to death. Their great concern should, therefore, be to extricate themselves from this dangerous dependence on the outside world, rather than to cling fast to their manufactures and trade which have brought them to their present state. By building up a large and unjust import trade with India and other dependent countries, they have rendered the occupations of millions of their countrymen uncertain and precarious, and now, as Dr. Moonje said after his return from the first Round Table Conference: 'They are more afraid of the boycott than of all the reasonings of the able

delegates to the Conference.'

In the words of Adam Smith, slightly modified to suit the context, the monopoly of the Indian trade, by forcing towards it much greater proportion of the capital of Great Britain than would naturally have gone to it, seems to have broken altogether that natural balance which would otherwise have taken place among all the different branches of British industry. The industry of Great Britain, instead of being accommodated to a great number of small markets, has been principally suited to one great market. Her commerce, instead of running in a great number of small channels, has been taught to run principally in one great channel. But the whole system of her industry and commerce has thereby been rendered less secure, the whole state of her body politic less healthful than it otherwise would have been. In her present condition, Great Britain resembles one of those unwholesome bodies, in which some of its vital parts are overgrown, and which upon that account, are liable to many dangerous disorders, scarce incidental to those in which all the parts are more properly proportioned. A small stop in that great blood vessel, which has been artificially swelled beyond its normal dimensions, and through which an unnatural proportion of the industry and commerce of the country has been forced to circulate, is very likely to bring on the most dangerous disorders upon the whole body politic. The expectation of a rupture of trade relations with India accordingly, has struck the people of Great

Britain with more terror than they ever felt for a Spanish Armada or a French or German invasion. The blood of which the circulation is stopped in some of the smaller vessels, easily discharges into the greater without occasioning any dangerous disorder; which if stopped in any of the greater vessels, convulsions apoplexy, or death are the immediate and unavoidable consequences. If but one of those overgrown manufactures, which being artificially raised up to any unnatural height finds some small stop or interruption in its employment, it frequently occasions a mutiny and disorder alarming to the Government, and embarrassing even to the deliberations of the legislature. How great, therefore, would be the disorder and confusion it is thought, which must necessarily be occasioned by a sudden and entire stop in the employment of so great a proportion of our principal manufacturers who trade entirely with India.

Thus even the inhabitants of industrial countries do not really benefit from the modern system of mass production. It is a curse to the working class people who are deprived of the elementary right of human beings to be able to earn their bread by honest work; and it is a curse to those unlucky ones also on whom providence in its mockery of profusion, showers hailstorms of blessings. The unfortunates who are doomed to live the lives of penury and suffering, look with envy and dismay on all the blessings of providence raining on the rich; and the unfortunates who receive those

profusions of blessings, are ever in fear of being overwhelmed by the excess of those blessings. While manufactures turn agriculturists, farmers, and honest independent workers into factory hands and mean mechanics, who follow precarious occupations, and large numbers of whom may at any time be rendered unemployed and made miserable by the vicissitudes of trade; the same manufactures create some trade magnates and large numbers of businessmen, who can indulge in yachting, horse-racing, air-flying, dancing, dissipation, and other frivolous pursuits, for a few years, before going the way of bankruptcy and ruin which traders of all ages and nations are doomed to go sooner or later. Therefore, although to the perverted mentality of the English, the greatness and prosperity of their country depends only on the revival of their manufactures and trade; and any suggestion of preference in India for home-made articles to articles of foreign manufactures, is offensive to them, to unprejudiced minds it should be clear that greatness built on modern manufactures and trade must sooner or later come to an inglorious end.

It is like the fabulous riches acquired by a small seaside village of fishermen in a story. The male population of the village had all perished in trying to rescue a steamer in distress, and in response to newspaper appeals for funds for the help of the widows and children of the heroic fishermen, immense sums of money came pouring into the village from all quarters of the world,

so that all the widows became fabulously rich. The immediate and inevitable results of those riches were the luxurious and loose living of the inhabitants, and great inflow of merchants, traders, and other parasites into the village.

"There was a tremendous craze for electricity, and the women bought every kind of electrical things from the traders: electrical egg-whisks, electrical hair brushes, electrical sweepers, electrical hair-curlers, electrical cookers, electrical fires, electrical washers and so forth; until there was not a woman among them that needed to lift a hand, except maybe to push a button.

"And yet in spite of their great riches, it brought them small happiness. They sent off their boys and girls to fine schools, where they played tennis like lords and ladies, and wore badges in their caps. And the children grew ashamed of the villas their mothers had built, and would never come home to them."

And then, in one venture after another, for multiplying their wealth, the women lost their fortunes.

"And one by one the women went away as their money dwindled and they could no longer keep the big villas they had built themselves and outdo their neighbours in displays of luxury. So now they are all gone, and there is not a man, woman nor child to be seen, for who would live in this place unless he were born in it and made his living on the sea."

The above in miniature is the true picture of the modern industrial and trade prosperity. The great

manufacturers and merchant princes have acquired fabulous riches, and have built themselves great villas. There is a tremendous craze for everything electrical, so that there is not a man among them that need to lift his hands except maybe to push a button. And yet their great riches have brought them little happiness. All the time misadventures of trade are robbing them one by one of their fortunes; and evil designs of their less wealthy neighbours are making it extremely difficult and expensive for them to guard their cherished possessions of electrical egg-whisks, electrical hair brushes, and so forth. And the time is not far distant when no longer able to keep their big villas and to guard their cherished trinkets, they will abandon them and go; and not a man will remain there except those who are able to make their living on the produce of their industry and labour.

TRADE AND MANUFACTURES—IV

Although, as we have seen in the foregoing discussion, manufactures and commerce are intrinsically unproductive of wealth for large countries, and wealth even if acquired by their means, generally by dishonest devices, is unreal and transient; their thriving condition in any country is the surest indication of the flourishing state of the people of that country. No country could make much progress in arts, industries, and trade, unless that country had surplus wealth to support these. And greater the amount of surplus food in any country, that is, greater the prosperity of its people, more and more industries and trade, learning and arts, will flourish in it. The wealth and civilization of any country, are therefore, judged by the state of its industries and commerce, and by its learning and arts. Before the advent of the British in India, industries, commerce and arts flourished in the land as perhaps these flourished nowhere else in the world of those days; and India was by all accounts the most wealthy and the most civilized country. Sir Thomas Munro, a former Governor of Madras, when asked by the committee of the House of Commons in 1813, if the civilization of the Hindus would not be improved by the establishment of trade between India and England, gave the

following reply:—

‘I do not understand what is meant by the civilization of the Hindus. In the higher branches of science, in the knowledge of the theory and practice of good Government, and in education which, by banishing prejudice and superstition, opens the mind to receive instruction of every kind from any quarter, they are much inferior to Europeans. But if a good system of agriculture, unrivalled manufacturing skill, a capacity to produce whatever can contribute to convenience and luxury; schools established in every village for teaching, reading, writing and arithmetic; the general practice of hospitality and charity amongst each other, and above all, a treatment of the female sex full of confidence, respect, and delicacy, are among the signs which denote a civilized people, then the Hindus are not inferior to the nations of Europe, and if civilization is to become an article of trade between the two countries, I am convinced that this country (England) will gain by the import cargo.’

With a good system of agriculture, unrivalled manufacturing skill, excellent arts and industries, a widespread and almost universal system of education for the instruction of young children in the essentials of education, and a high state of civilization of the people, India was indeed a most thriving country before the advent of the British. We have already seen that India as a country is much too large and much too thickly populated to derive any profit or greatness by developing

manufactures for outside trade. India can never hope to acquire wealth by the export of her manufactured goods; so she need not waste her resources in the useless endeavour of developing manufacturing industries for purposes of export. Even Great Britain, which is one of the greatest manufacturing and trading countries of the world, could at no time sell more than one-third of her manufactures to outsiders; so India, if she ever become a great manufacturing country, could not sell perhaps a twentieth part of her manufactures to other people. The revival of manufactures and industries of India must, therefore, be for the purpose of the development of internal trade of the country; and such a development, by preserving the wealth of the country within the country itself, which at present flows out of it by the great artificial channel of her foreign trade, will restore prosperity to the masses.

Extensive development of manufactures and trade of India beyond what the surplus food of the country can reasonably support, must necessarily impoverish the masses. But the revival of industries and internal trade of the country to the greatest extent, of what the surplus means of the producers of wealth will support, so that these provide the greatest comforts and conveniences to the inhabitants of the country, and liberal revenues and subsistence to the important sections of the population of manufacturers and merchants would be the surest means of reviving India's lost prosperity and greatness. The revival of industries and trade of India

will not only provide revenues and subsistence to large sections of the population of the country, but will also bring about the much needed reform in the system of the government, by a general awakening of the people as a result of their improved economic condition.

The great objective of all true Indians, therefore, should be to stop the enormous flow of wealth out of the land by the utmost development of industries and trade of the country within the limits of what the real surplus wealth of the people will support. Subject to the necessary limitation of real surplus wealth of the country supporting industry and trade, without undue encouragement being given to their development, their growth is always advantageous to any country; and the advantages accruing from their growth to the country are obviously proportional to the conveniences, comforts, and even luxuries, that these provide to the largest numbers of the inhabitants of the country. For the growth of real prosperity of any country, there must be a just distribution of wealth between agriculture and manufactures, so that agriculture flourishes and industries thrive. Any attempts in any country, to unduly favour industries and trade at the expense of agriculture, tend to the decline of agriculture and impoverishment of the country; and the decline of agriculture must of necessity react against the growth of industries and trade themselves.

Correct distribution of surplus wealth of the country, between agriculture and industries being thus the

first essential for the healthy growth of manufactures and trade themselves, the evils of heavy taxation of agricultural produce, and the unjust system of distribution of the produce between the landlords and the producers need first to be removed, before proper development of industries and trade can take place in India. After the system of taxation of agricultural produce of the country has been reformed, and systems of just division of the produce between the landlords and the cultivators have been established, the correct distribution of wealth between agriculture and industries will establish of itself, without any further attention from anybody.

These considerations at once bring us to the great questions of the use of large scale machinery in industries; of the use of mechanical means of transport in operations of commerce; and of the development of large scale manufactures and manufacturing trusts as against small industries. From a superficial consideration, the employment of mechanical means in preference to human or animal agency in industries and transport of goods, and the establishment of large scale manufactures and trusts in preference to small industries, appear to us as the most effective means of multiplying conveniences and luxuries with the available surplus wealth of the country. But only a little further consideration shows us that the multiplication of conveniences and luxuries by mechanical means, and their cheap production by means of great manufacturing

organizations, will not provide conveniences and comforts to the largest numbers of the inhabitants; and when they fail to do so, the very object of the development of manufactures and trade is obviously defeated. In countries where populations are scanty, mixed farming and large scale cultivation take up the whole time of farmers and cultivators, and mechanical appliances can be introduced with advantage even into agricultural operations, the unqualified use of mechanical appliances in manufactures and transport, and the establishment of large manufacturing organizations may possibly be justified. The use of machinery in manufactures and transport of goods, and the establishment of large manufacturing organizations, may possibly tend to provide the greatest conveniences and luxuries to the largest numbers of inhabitants of such countries, without depriving the artisans and industrial workers of liberal revenue and subsistence; although even in such countries too, unrestricted use of mechanical appliances in industries may provoke the resentment of the working class people, as sometime ago happened in Australia, when the workers in certain coal mines adopted the desperate expedient of shutting themselves up in the mines and flooding the mines, as a protest against the introduction of mechanical drills to replace human labour.

But in India, with her population of over 350 millions, large numbers of whom cannot possibly get profitable employments anywhere, general use of

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machinery in manufactures must tend to throw large numbers of industrial workers out of employment, for whom no other occupations could be found. Also large scale manufactures of cheap goods, by giving the monopoly and control of industries to a few rich individuals, in a country of plentiful and poor labour, must tend to lower the demand for and the recompense of industrial workers. Thus, mechanization and centralization of industries in India cannot but be injurious to the majority of the population, until such time, at least, as the development of cultivation and industries, and improvement in the economic condition of the masses, do not produce scarcity of and greater demand for labour.

Also, in India, where agriculture employs four-fifths of the population, and seasonal cultivation must be carried on by means of agricultural cattle in small plots of land, and cultivators and their farming cattle, have no work in the field for several months in the year, simple industries and transport of goods over short distances, are best and most economically done without the introduction of expensive and complicated machinery and mechanical means of transport. A few yards of cotton cloth, which a cultivator may require for his year's use, or a few bags of wheat, cotton, or oil seeds, which he may have to carry from his village to the market town, will require some expense, however little, to make in a cloth mill, or to carry in a motor truck respectively; but it will cost practically nothing

to him if the cloth were made by the cultivator and his wife in their spare hours, or the goods were carried to the market town in the cultivator's or his neighbour's cart, when his bullocks were not required to work in the field. Similarly, leather tanning for simple country shoes and other uses, rope making, oil pressing, sugar manufacture for local use and consumption, manufacture of agricultural implements and tools, and numerous other simple operations of manufacture, can be best and most economically, though perhaps some of them not so cheaply carried on in India in the villages without the help of mechanical appliances.

The use of machinery, if we extend it to all such manufactures as can be carried on by the villagers in their spare time, or with very little training and manufacturing skill, can only have the effect of depriving the cultivators of some of their subsistence and wealth; part of which will go to the rich manufacturers of machinery, and part to the rich factory or mill owners. Most of the superior and elegant articles of comforts and luxury, such as brocades, silk cloths, gold and silver ornaments, pieces of good furniture, paintings, etc., can only be turned to perfection by skilled human hands. So, in India, the use of large scale machinery in manufactures must, even from considerations of economy and quality of goods, be confined to a few rough and cheap articles of general use and consumption, which require such special conditions as are not available in the villages. Even in most of the European countries, except for

large scale manufactures, mostly for the purpose of export to foreign countries, most of the agricultural and many manufacturing operations are still carried on by manual labour; and in the streets of London, the horse wagon for the conveyance of goods from one part of the city to another, or for the conveyance of vegetables, milk, and poultry from the country to the town, still holds its own against motor trucks and railways. In agricultural countries, like Italy, France, Central and Eastern Europe, and agricultural parts of Germany, manual labour for all agricultural and simple industrial operations, and animal transport of light goods over short distances, will not be replaced by machinery and mechanical transport, perhaps at any time.

Even in large industries and very large works in India, in her present economic condition, human labour is much more satisfactory and economical than the mechanical means. The construction of large canals, which has been going on in various parts of India on a very large scale in recent years, has involved excavation, lifting, and removal of millions and millions of tons of earth, almost the whole of which has been accomplished by human labour. Wherever mechanical excavators were employed, true levels of excavation were not attained, the quality of work was extremely poor, and the cost of excavation was greatly in excess of what it would have cost to get the work done by human labour. Wherever a mechanical excavator had been at work for some time, armies of labour had afterwards to be

employed to put the confusion wrought by the excavators in some sort of order. Excavation of earth may not come exactly within the category of industries; but when simple operations involving enormous output of work do not lend themselves to treatment by mechanical appliances, small handicrafts and industries, which require skilful handling, and can be conveniently carried on by men and women in their homes, could hardly be done economically with the help of elaborate mechanical apparatus.

Indeed, there are not perhaps any manufactures or industries, with the exception of large iron works, cement works, and some other heavy industries, in which the almost exclusive employment of human labour in preference to machinery would not be advantageous even from consideration of satisfactory and economical manufacture of goods. And when we take into account the heavy initial cost of almost all industrial machinery, and the recurring heavy expenses of replacements and repairs, that must be paid to outside countries for a very long time to come, if industries were to be generally mechanised in India, we must come to the irresistible conclusion that there can generally be no advantage of extending the use of machinery to manufactures in India.

The object of the development of manufactures, industries, and internal trade of the country can only be to increase conveniences, comforts, and luxuries for the largest numbers of the population of the country.

This object can best be achieved by providing varied employments to all the people who are able to work, so that by their work, they both acquire the means of obtaining articles of conveniences, comforts, and luxuries, and also increase the range of enjoyments. In the effort to increase the range of articles of convenience, comforts, and luxuries, by replacing human labour by machinery, the means of the people to obtain manufactured articles will be necessarily curtailed; and, therefore, such an effort must end in failure. In fact, no manufactures or industries can really flourish in India until the means of the people are first improved.

Thus, the projects of making the country prosperous, by the development of large scale manufactures and industries in India, to which even the Indian National Congress has now begun to lend support, are either the visionary schemes of enthusiasts, who mistake the glitter and pomp of some of the manufacturing countries for their real prosperity; or else, the ambitious schemes of merchants and manufacturers, to whom their own flourishing condition is synonymous with the prosperity of the whole country. They forget that, all manufactures and arts, as the hobbies of collecting precious metals, gems and pearls, are really the expressions of abundance and prosperity and the means of spending surplus wealth. These only indicate prosperous condition of the countries where they flourish, but do not bring prosperity where poverty reigns supreme. It is nobody's right to divert human resources and energies

to the manufacture or acquisition of articles of comforts and luxuries, or for the satisfaction of idle hobbies of acquiring precious metals and gems, until sufficient and wholesome food and proper clothing and lodgings are available to all the inhabitants of the country. The hobbies of acquiring precious metals, stones, and pearls, are particularly harmful and dangerous, because, besides the actual waste which occurs in all other idle pursuits, the acquisition of precious metals and stones renders idle succeeding generations of people, who may happen to possess by any accident some of those metals and stones, and throws additional burden on the producers of food to feed generations of idle persons. Real wealth of the world, human food, is incapable of being stored up beyond a short period; but the greed and ingenuity of man have devised a system, whereby they first spend enormous quantities of food and human labour in digging out precious metals, and then set values on them which will obtain or buy large quantities of food and other necessities afterwards. In this manner, people perform the impossible task of storing up wealth, that is, acquire for themselves and transfer to their successors the right to remain idle, as long as they may happen to possess that stored up wealth. For this reason, the hobby of collecting precious metals and gems is even more harmful to society than the waste of luxury and war.

But, the development of large scale manufacturing industries in various countries, in which machinery by

replacing human labour deprives human beings of their work and subsistence, and centralised control leads to the accumulation of large stocks with the owners and organisers of large manufactures, is the direct cause of the scramble that is going on in the world at present, for the acquisition of precious metals and gems. The growth of large manufacturers, by attracting disproportionately large quantities of wealth of the same country or of other countries to themselves, lead to that unequal distribution of wealth which creates famine, where nature gave plenty. Suppression, and not encouragement of manufacturing industries, and of the hobbies of collecting precious metals, stones, and other articles of luxury and waste, is, therefore, the present need of India, so long as her people do not get the first necessities of life. After the primary needs of the people of the country have been satisfied, manufactures, industries, arts, pleasures, and luxuries will grow and multiply without any encouragement from anybody, according to the extent of the surplus wealth available for the growth of industries and arts. In fact, manufactures and luxuries have a tendency to outgrow the means available for their support, and lead to the deterioration of habits, tastes, and morals of the people, and ultimate ruin of prosperity of the countries in which they grow unchecked. So, discouragement and not encouragement of large manufactures and unseemly luxuries should be the aim of all sober-minded people. The duty of the state and the people whenever they should

happen to have surplus wealth, is not to encourage large manufactures, and luxuries, but it is to prevent their growth on lines which may tend to pervert the modes of living, tastes, and morals of the people. Just as excess of armaments must always lead to war, and excess of energy to aggression, so must always the excess of wealth lead to the repudiation of God by men, and to the repudiation of the social ties which bind them to their families, friends, and mankind generally, unless effective checks are placed by the State and saner elements among the people, on excessive growth of luxuries.

The real excess of wealth of America, and false and precarious prosperity of Britain, have converted their good and industrious people into absolute pleasure seekers. No one can have any quarrel with the Americans for spending fifty million pounds in one year, on a few old paintings, if they do not know what to do with their wealth. But the sickening debauchery of men and women of manufacturing countries, their growing distaste for the happiness and placidity of married home life, as evidenced by their freedom of sexual relations, unhappy marriages, and frequent divorces, which are being more and more facilitated by State laws, are fatal disorders of society which will lead to the destruction of those people, if effective steps are not taken by them to cut short the progress of those deadly evils. Excess of wealth with sober-minded and god-fearing people should find more befitting

employment than for the destruction of both their morals and the most sacred institution of married home life.

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The various formulæ of the British for the grant of Responsible Government to India, with safeguards and guarantees, are nothing more than their crude attempts to perpetuate their unjust trading and financial advantages which, as we have seen, are paving the way for their own ruin. The passing of the India bill into law, in the teeth of all Indian opposition to it, and the previous and later acts and pronouncements of British Ministers and statesmen, all go to confirm the general impression in India that the paramount consideration with the British, more important than the lasting well-fare and prosperity of their own people, is the continuance of their doomed mercantile greatness. To perpetuate this illusion of greatness, their best men, besides resorting to numerous tricks and devices, will not hesitate to go back on their most solemn pledges. Even before the ink was dry on Irwin-Gandhi Pact, according to which, among other things, it was agreed that only safeguards in the interests of India should be discussed at the Round Table Conference, Lord Irwin, that great and good Viceroy, did not hesitate to say that he had never been able to appreciate the distinction, sought to be drawn, between the interests of India and the interests of Great Britain, for it would be contrary to all

nature if a long relationship between the two had not been able to create a community and not divergence of interests. "Defence, for example, was a vital interest of India, but also surely a British and Imperial interest, of the first magnitude. Communal difficulty was a prime Indian interest, but Great Britain before handing over power, must satisfy herself that in a new dispensation, the just rights of the minorities would not be imperilled." Proceeding His Excellency said: "Again as regards assurance to British traders against unfair discrimination, I say, that Indian leaders themselves should volunteer assurances of fair treatment in order to attract capital for the Country's development, and for raising India's credit in the world, on which development, would depend the raising of the standard of her people's life. So with finance, Indian opinion is surely not less anxious than any opinion in Great Britain, to see ample security provided, where necessary for the good of India, in the sphere of credit and finance. Those who would suggest an alternative to the scheme of the Round Table Conference would have to convince His Majesty's Government that it would be equally effective for the purpose above described."

Thus, in one passage of an after-dinner speech, delivered not many days after his making a solemn agreement with Mahatmaji, Lord Irwin could not resist the temptation of speaking out the true English sentiments on the questions of defence, safeguarding the rights of minorities, foreign trade, finance and credit.

His Lordship said that he had never been able to appreciate the distinction sought to be drawn between the interests of India and the interests of Great Britain; for it would be contrary to nature if a long relationship between the two had not been able to create a community and not divergence of interests. After his five years' experience as the Viceroy of India, in such critical times, His Excellency must have known that notwithstanding the long relationship, there could not be, and there was not, any community of interests between the British giant and the Indian dwarf. Indeed, it would be contrary to nature if such relationship had created community of interests. The interest of the one is to expropriate and to exploit the other, while all that the other can do is to try to escape exploitation. When one party has employed its long arm for so many generations to suppress the other, it would be futile to expect community of interests on the basis of length of such relationship. Even now, the community of interests can only be created by the stronger party realizing their past injustice, or, at any rate, by not persisting in perpetuating the old wrongs.

His Excellency spoke about defence being a vital interest to India, but also surely a British and Imperial interest of the first magnitude. Have the British and Imperial Government ever contributed anything towards the cost of safeguarding their interest of the 'first magnitude'? For generations, the British have saddled India with the maintenance of a standing army,

greatly in excess of India's requirements of defence against external aggression, which eat up half of the revenues of the country; they have saddled her with the cost of foreign wars fought by Great Britain in Imperial interests, they 'bled India white' using the words of Lord Hardinge, by means of forced contributions of men and money from India, during the last Great War; they are desperately trying to extract guarantees from India for the future maintenance of this vast and ruinous army; and yet they expect community of interests of the two countries! The solution of the communal difficulty is a prime Indian interest, but the communal difficulty itself is of British creation; and if they withdraw their officious meddling and intervention tomorrow, there would be no communal difficulty, and no occasion for their solicitude to safeguard the just rights of minorities.

Again on the vexed questions of foreign trade, credit, and finance. Has there ever been community of interests between the dealers of goods and lenders of money on the one hand, and forced buyers and borrowers on the other; especially when the dealers of goods and lenders of money should happen to have the stronger arm and an insatiable greed, and no scruples to restrain them from the misuse of their strength for the gratification of their cupidity? His Excellency needed only to recall a few chapters of the early British Indian history, or even the present trade, finance, credit, and exchange policies of the Government, to

realize the truth of Mahatmaji's saying that the 'Englishman has risen on the ruin of India's commerce and industries. The cottage industry of India had to perish in order that Lancashire might flourish; Indian shipping had to perish, so that British shipping might flourish.'

Did His Excellency then want assurances from the Indian leaders that they would in future support British trade and industry which have risen on the ruins of India's commerce and industries? And knowing as His Excellency did, how much of the future resources of India have already been mortgaged and continue to be mortgaged by the Government with accelerated speed, was His Excellency quite candid when he advised Indian leaders to volunteer assurances of fair treatment to attract capital for the country's development, and for raising India's credit in the world, on which development would depend the raising of the standard of her peoples' life?

Has not enough harm been already done to India by attracting foreign capital for her development, and must India needs give further assurances for tightening the bonds round herself and for ruining the prosperity and happiness of her future generations? Has the past development of the country, which has been achieved with nearly a thousand million pounds of capital borrowed from Great Britain, in contemptuous disregard of Indian opposition to it, in any way raised the standard of her peoples' living? To the ordinary understanding, the past development of India, by the construction of

railways and other enterprises, carried out almost entirely with borrowed capital, has converted a prosperous and self-sufficient country into a British colony, for the production and export of food grains and raw materials; and her own people have been driven to the lowest depths of poverty, by their industries having been destroyed and they themselves having been compelled to annually export abroad the sustenance of millions of people.

The very circumstances which are represented by them as indicating increasing prosperity of the country, namely, the growth of large towns, the magnificence of her rich landlords and merchant princes, the extensive systems of roads, railways, and even large irrigation works, and above all, the enormous growth of her foreign trade, are understood by thinking Indians to be the causes of India's growing impoverishment. The growth of large towns and merchant princes denotes to them increasing foreign trade and increasing export of foodstuffs and raw materials, and now also of gold and silver, from the country, besides the ruin of indigenous industries and internal trade. The magnificence of her landlords and merchant princes in the midst of rank poverty of the people, denotes to them extremely unequal distribution of wealth among the people, and a great drain on the resources of the country, by means of a constant stream of prodigality and dissipation of the rich. The extensive systems of railways, and even the beneficent irrigation works,

denote to them ever-tightening hold of the British rulers, in their capacity of money-lenders, on the present and future resources of the country.

As regards finance, Indian opinion is indeed anxious to thresh out the financial transactions of her British rulers, which have piled up the enormous debt of nearly a thousand million pounds against India, notwithstanding the fact that the trade balance has always been represented to be in favour of India. But on this point, His Excellency, like all other British politicians, preferred to remain silent. Their reluctance to submit the question of India's debt to scrutiny, lends strong colour to the prevalent belief in India that their old manipulations and extravagant public debts, their financial transactions with India in connection with the last Great War, and even in connection with the heavy loans which they raised some time ago in the London market, have not been of such a nature as would stand critical examination. And yet they want ample security provided, for the good of India, in the sphere of credit and finance!

This was a digression. We have seen that, besides the brutalising effects of large scale manufactures and trade, these exhaust and impoverish the masses, both where the manufactures are carried on, and where the manufactured articles are sold. Millions in India, in spite of her great fertility and wealth, do not get sufficient and wholesome food, have little or no clothing, and live in the midst of filth and disease, all their

miserable, short-lived lives, principally on account of the pressure of large scale manufactures of the west on the occupations and employments of Indians.

This perpetual starvation and miserable poverty of the people must be relieved before any projects for the establishment of large manufactures can be honestly conceived by the rich people, and suffered to exist by any government professing solicitude for the welfare of the masses. Manufactures are the offsprings of overflow of wealth, and neither the means of creating wealth, nor of preventing wealth from going out of the land. Any premature attempts to save the wealth of India from going out of the land, by substituting Indian for British or other foreign manufactures, will only tend to impoverish the people, by the transfer of stock from agriculture, or the wealth producing industry, to the wealth spending organisations of manufactures. The only way to save the wealth of India from going out of the country, and also to establish sound manufactures and industries in the country, itself is for Indians to abstain, as far as possible, from indulging in luxuries of large scale manufactures, both foreign and Indian; so that the very great wealth, now going out of the land by the great channel of her foreign trade, may be diffused among the masses, to feed the famished workers, to improve the condition of the cattle, to enrich the overwrought soil, and to revive strangled industries of the country. The only effective help that the government of the land can render to

the toiling and starving millions of India is, not by encouraging her ruinous foreign trade, nor even by encouraging the growth of large manufactures within the country itself, but by suppressing them both, by imposing prohibitive tariffs on the import of all foreign manufactures, and by imposing heavy excise duties on all large manufactures within the country itself; so that the twofold purpose of preserving the wealth of the country within the country itself, and of diffusing this wealth among the masses may be achieved. Prosperity of the country cannot be inferred from the ever-increasing figures of her foreign trade, nor from the extension of the use of cigarettes and aerated waters into the villages, nor even from the growth of a few large trading and manufacturing towns in the country. The only criterion of real prosperity of any country is whether all the inhabitants get simple necessities of life, and are not haunted by the nightmare of hunger in their dreams. This indication of real prosperity of the country is sadly wanting. People are growing more and more poor every day, as far as their ability to procure the simplest food, clothing, and lodgings goes.

Real prosperity of cities springs from that of the country around them, from where they derive their sustenance and support and the means of indulging in arts, crafts, industries, pleasures, and amusements. The glamour of some of the Indian cities with their palatial buildings, fine roads, theatres, picture houses, lawns, public parks, electric lights, and tram and bus

services, when all around them the country is plunged in indescribable poverty, arises not from the prosperity of the country, but from the ruin of their land—from the cities acting as agents to barter away the wealth of the country for baubles and knick-knacks of foreign manufactures. As Mahatmaji said in reply to an address of the Bombay Corporation some years ago: "If the cities want to justify their existence they must improve the condition of the villages. The betterment of the lot of poverty-stricken masses and finding bread for hungry millions, that's what connotes Purna Swaraj." He further appealed to the Corporation to introduce Takli and Charkha into primary schools, thus solving the problem of poverty. So far, Indian cities, by building up their prosperity on foreign trade and exploitation of the masses, have only impoverished the country instead of solving the problem of its poverty.

During the last campaign of boycott of foreign cloth and other foreign goods in 1930-31, Indian cities lost some of their trade, which interested British merchants and officials and some shallow-witted Indian politicians termed as the economic ruin of the country. But was it economic ruin or the real beginning of economic revival of the country? To the vast majority of the Indian population, to the tillers of the soil, and to the workers on the looms, the boycott campaign showed the first dim rays of light through the gloom of a long era of dark and ever-darkening poverty. Although from artificial causes, the clouds somewhat

thickened for the time being, the boycott of foreign goods gave promise of the dawn of a new era to the industrial and agricultural classes of the country; when landlords, revenue officials, and traders, should not be able to snatch away all their wealth from them season after season, and when their work and industry should bring them suitable recompense. The fall in the money prices of the produce of land, created by the Government's policy of maintaining a very high ratio of exchange, made it difficult for the cultivators to meet the exorbitant demands of landlords and the Government of rents and taxes, but this could not possibly be a permanent difficulty; as sooner or later, the landlords and the government would have felt compelled either to lower their demands to correspond with the prevailing prices of commodities, or the unfair ratio of exchange would have broken down and the prices of commodities would have gone up automatically. Even without the ratio of exchange breaking down, the heavy fall in the value of the British sterling greatly lowered the value of the rupee, which is linked to the pound, and the prices of commodities rose considerably to the just relief of Indian agriculturists. Except for this temporary difficulty, the boycott movement itself gave promise of a bright future for the country; and even the trading classes lent their valuable support to it.

Before the boycott movement, India was supposed to send out nearly two hundred and fifty million pounds worth, of the produce of the country, to foreign

countries, major portion of it to Great Britain; and got in return muslins, fine silks, motor cars, and numerous other trumperies, and also some gold and silver, valued at nearly thirty million pounds annually, which represented a small portion of the balance of trade in favour of India; the greater portion of the favourable balance being absorbed by the enormous contributions of Home Charges and other remittances from India to England. India's rulers and financiers were never tired of telling the people of India that, in the otherwise advantageous and ever-growing trade with the manufacturing countries, this import of gold and silver was a great drawback, which meant so much dead capital kept out of employment. There is no gainsaying the fact that the conversion of thirty million pounds worth of food and other produce of the soil into gold and silver was so much dead capital kept out of its proper employment of feeding the workers and enriching the soil; but then the remaining two hundred and twenty million pounds worth of exports of food and raw materials, in exchange for useless trinkets of foreign manufactures, was also dead capital kept out of its proper employment. Gold and silver are in reality worthless like muslins and silks, but if there was any better bargain than the others, which India made with the foreigners, in her ruinous export trade of two hundred and fifty million pounds worth of the produce of the soil, it was this import of thirty million pounds worth of gold and silver.

But on account of the boycott campaign and other economic causes, the foreign trade of India fell off by more than one-third in value in one year of boycott, and a still greater decline of it, if not its total extinction might have been expected in the next few years, to the immense benefit of India's millions, and to the permanent good, though temporary inconvenience, even of the merchants and traders of India and of Great Britain, if the movement had been allowed to continue.

For after all, what do Indian merchants and traders get as their commission, by selling away the bread of their country's starving millions? Restless, scheming, uneasy minds; ruined constitutions; a little share of the imported trumperies, mostly in the shape of gold and silver; some suffocating houses in the midst of crowded and congested cities, a natural or adopted prodigal son, and bankruptcy and ruin as the result of the son's worthlessness and prodigality, or mishaps of trade in the end! We may pick out the examples of merchants and manufacturers of any age and of any country; and it will be seen that, not in the case of perhaps one in a hundred, have these so-called riches remained in any house for more than one or two generations. And yet all the scheming and striving for this illusory wealth! If the rich merchants of India, when they are building palatial temples in honour of their gods, or are giving out large charities for the establishment of hospitals, schools, and widow's homes, knew that their philanthropies would make very little atonement for the crime they have

committed, of robbing the bread of their starving fellow beings, they would perhaps halt in their insane scramble for mercantile riches. And yet the crime of money-making merchants is the crime of starving millions of people; only the blind love of illusory and transient gains keeps them ignorant of it.

Wealth of the country enriching the towns, and then some of it flowing back from the town to enrich the country, is the only sound economics which tends to increasing prosperity of both the country and the towns. Any attempt to reverse this order, to enrich the towns without regard to the condition of the country, must render the prosperity and riches of the towns very uncertain and precarious indeed. And larger the country and its population, more necessary must it be that the condition of the country should improve before towns can aspire to real and lasting prosperity. So, although Great Britain may have derived some short-lived advantages by reversing this natural order, and by giving undue encouragement to the industry of the towns; India could never hope to derive any real benefit by neglecting the country and giving undue encouragement to the growth of the towns. Her towns must prosper or decline with the prosperity or decline of the country.

For Indian cities to justify their existence and also to secure their lasting prosperity, they must make their contribution to the prosperity of the country; and the only way in which they can do this is by giving up their

foreign trade, at least the trade in foreign cloth and foreign yarns, which are the articles of heaviest imports into India. By giving up trade in foreign cloth and yarns, they will straightway wipe off one-third of the annual loss of wealth of India, and this gain will be distributed over a wide population, throughout the length and breadth of the country. The cities need not fear loss of their prosperity and occupations of their men from such an event; for the decline of foreign trade will bring about the revival of indigenous industries and internal trade of the country; and no trade in the world can conduce so much to the prosperity of the country and the towns as indigenous industries and the great inland trade can.

Inland trade of the country, which consists in the exchange of the produce of land for manufactured articles, or in the exchange of articles manufactured in one part of the country for those manufactured in another, provides such stimulus to the industry of both the country and the towns, as it is not possible for any foreign trade to do. With the decline of the ruinous foreign trade, the countryside of India, which now remains slumbering in the sleep of poverty for the greater part of the year, except during crop-sowing and crop-cutting seasons, will begin to hum with the life of innumerable little industries of its own; and the towns, which at present carry on the mean operations of commission agents, with the fear of loss of trade always hanging over them, will ring with the noise of

manufactures and industries for which their situations and conditions suit them, and will pulsate with a healthy and ever-increasing circulation and exchange of commodities from various parts of the country.

The foreign trade of India has left only partial employment to the cultivators, and almost none at all to old manufacturers and artisans. It has thus greatly narrowed the scope of employment of the people of the country, and has thrown an unnecessarily heavy burden on the tillers of the soil, who have to support ever-increasing numbers of the unemployed and the idlers. The decline of foreign trade will open up numerous and varied employments to manufacturers, artisans, and workers of the country, thereby relieving pressure on the soil and bringing prosperity to the towns, which are the natural places for manufactures and industries. The cities, therefore, need not be apprehensive about their future on account of the decay of foreign trade. They will gain as much, or even more than the country, by the falling off of the foreign trade. It is inevitable that some of the cities, particularly the centres of import of foreign goods, will lose in population and wealth; but new ones, more populous and wealthy will spring up in new industrial centres and on important routes of inland trade, and the trading classes therefore will not suffer. Some of them may have to seek fresh employments for their stock and new places from where to carry on their trade; but new employments of stock will be more certain, and their mercantile operations

more secure from the vicissitudes of trade, than they are at present.

Nor need the trading classes fear that the extent of the revival of inland trade of the country will not compensate them for the decline of the foreign trade. At present a very great portion of the wealth of the country goes out of the land to support foreign trade. All this wealth, and a great deal more, that will be produced in the country in consequence of improving agricultural conditions, must lend increasing stimulus and prosperity to industries and internal trade of the country. At present the foreign trade of India is carried on at a disadvantage of twenty to one to the industry and employment of India in respect of wages of labour. With the disappearance of this great disadvantage it is difficult to visualize how great the industry and trade of India will grow. At present the administration and defence of India are ruinously expensive to the country. With the awakening of public opinion in India, consequent on the increasing prosperity of the people, expenses of administration and defence must go down greatly, and all or most of this surplus wealth must go to support industry and trade of India. Thus we see that the extent of the revival of internal trade of the country will be greater by far than any decline in her foreign trade. 'The good system of agriculture, unrivalled manufacturing skill, and the capacity to produce whatever can conduce to convenience and luxury' of the Hindus of two centuries

ago, although these have been suppressed by the power of steam and unjust regulations of trade, are still not extinct; and as soon as the hurtful causes disappear, the dormant skill and capacity of the people will manifest themselves in the quick revival of arts and industries. Trade of the country must flourish; because all the products of art and industry of any locality would nowhere be used up locally, and must exchange for the products of other localities. Moreover, the returns of internal trade being very much quicker than those of the distant foreign trade, the same stock and capital will perform many more operations of internal trade than they do of the foreign trade; and for this and so many other reasons, the future inland trade of the country will be immensely greater than her present foreign trade is. Thus the abdication of foreign trade by Indian traders will not entail loss of trade or employment to them: it will very greatly add to both.

But, however beneficial to the country the decline of her foreign trade may promise to be, individuals engaged in foreign trade will generally be averse to giving up profitable occupations merely on the speculation of great profits accruing to them from the growth of the inland trade. Indeed, some of the traders who successfully deal in foreign goods, may not succeed so well in the other trade; and growing inland trade of the country may pass into other than their hands. Therefore, although patriotic feelings of traders, or the exhortations or compulsion of those who were supposed to know the

interests of their country better than the trading classes, induced some of them to abstain from foreign trade for a short time during the boycott movement, the trading classes cannot generally be expected to permanently give up their profitable trade of their own accord. But at the same time the interests of a small body of traders, and as must turn out later, the wrongly understood interests of that body, howsoever rich and powerful they may be, should not be allowed to come in the way of the economic regeneration of the country. Foreigners exploit India principally through the agency of trade; so effective steps should be taken by the government of the country to put a stop to the foreign trade of India. In the new order of things, the present trading classes of the country, as the people best qualified to handle trade, will mostly engross the internal trade to themselves; but even if some few people should be afraid to suffer losses from the decline or stoppage of foreign trade, their prospective losses should not deter the Government from pursuing a decided policy in regard to foreign trade. Their loss should not count in comparison with the immense benefits that will accrue to millions of their starving countrymen by the decline of foreign trade and consequent revival of indigenous industries and internal trade of the country. Those people who are afraid of loss from the decline of foreign trade must be rich and substantial people, otherwise they cannot have much to lose; so the nightmare of losses to persons who are able to bear losses should not impede the progress

of the whole country. The government of the country should not hesitate 'to do a little wrong to do a great right', and should unflinchingly apply the axe to all foreign trade of the country, which is the root cause of the starvation and misery of millions.

As the establishment of large manufactures can not benefit India, the imposition of prohibitive tariffs on imported goods, and heavy excise duties on goods manufactured with the help of mechanical power within the country itself, appear to be the only effective means of protecting indigenous industries of the country, in the initial stages of their revival. These heavy tariffs and excise duties will only protect indigenous industries from annihilation by the monsters of steam and electricity and cannot possibly operate as protective duties, in the mercantile sense of the term, of giving the monopolies of certain industries to any particular classes or individuals. India contains too large a population and too great a market within the country for all kinds of goods, to let heavy import and excise duties on machine-made goods, act as impediments to the cheaper and better production of goods by human labour and industry, in fair and open competition. In a country of the size and population of India, in the initial stages of development of industries, at any rate, the imposition of heavy import and excise duties, instead of offending against the principle of free and fair trade, will strengthen this principle by preventing unfair competition of machine-made cheap goods with hand-made

articles of superior design, finish, and durability; and industries and trade of the country will flourish, as they possibly could not do without these duties.

TAXATION, FINANCE AND CREDIT

The great questions of taxation, finance and credit relating to a country of the size of India, and with the complexity of its conditions, could not possibly be discussed within the scope of a few pages. But as we are not concerned with the technical aspects of these, and merely wish to discuss the effects on the prosperity of the country of the general policy and attitude of the Government in these matters, the following brief discussion will perhaps enable us to form some idea as to how the adverse policy and attitude of the Government have been responsible for the poverty of the masses.

In every well-governed country, or rather in every country well or ill governed, the sovereign or the government must consider it their duty and interest to help and encourage people to provide plentiful revenue for themselves; so that the sovereign or the government may easily derive sufficient revenues from the people, for the administration and defence of the country. Any government which is deficient in its first essential duty of helping and encouraging the people to augment their wealth, most clearly act contrary to its own essential interests of being easily able to derive plentiful revenues from the people, and weakens the interest of the people in the stability of a government which is

indifferent to the prosperity of the people under its charge. Maintenance of law and order amongst a dissatisfied people may be the imperative duty of a government, but a still greater duty of it is to retain unimpaired the means of maintaining law and order; that is, the prosperity of the people under its charge, and thereby the interest of the people in its stability; because a people who are prosperous under a government can never afford to be dissatisfied with it.

Of course, as we saw in the previous chapter, no government or system of administration and defence of a country can be productive of wealth; they must consume a portion of the wealth produced by the people. But a government, by ensuring safety from external aggression, and by establishing peace and justice within the country itself, can promote and encourage productive occupations of the people, and secure to them the fruits of their labour and industry. The greatest incentive to work is the certainty of its reward; so, unless the people know beforehand that they will retain a greater portion of what they produce, they will not work with their full vigour and industry; and wealth of the country will inevitably decline. The British rule of India has brought security from external aggression and internal peace, as were perhaps unknown in the past, but from various causes, it has not encouraged productive occupations of the people, and has not conduced to their prosperity.

The need and value of peace in any country is

proportional to the wealth and prosperity of the greater body of the people of that country; so the peace which has led to the decay of prosperity of India is not of much value to the people. They would perhaps prefer to go back to the state of insecurity from outside enemies, and misrule in the country itself, if thereby they regained their lost prosperity. The ancient rulers of China, India, and Egypt, the three great countries, which, before the discovery of the New World and the ascendancy of Europe, had attained to the highest degrees of wealth and civilization, not perhaps surpassed by the richest countries even of the present day, made the improvement of cultivation and industries of their countries their chief concerns; and, for these reasons, in spite of some of the rulers being extravagant, wasteful, and even tyrannical, wealth abounded, and people prospered in their lands.

But in India, as the English conquered one province after the other, large tracts of land went out of cultivation from the inability of the people to cultivate lands profitably under the changed government; commerce rapidly declined; and towns were deserted by large numbers for lack of trade and occupations.

Reasons for such adverse effects of the extension of the British rule, on the prosperity of the people, are not far to seek. India was a very highly cultivated, thickly populated, and a great industrial country, before the British began to acquire power and possessions

in the country; and thus, there was very little scope for the new-comers to create additional wealth by their industry and labour. But, even after the acquisition of territorial possession by the British, their shopkeeper spirit of gain predominated in all their transactions and dealings with the people; so whatever they gained from India, was by expropriation of the previous owners of agricultural or industrial and commercial wealth and advantages. Their great concern at the acquisition of every new territory, instead of being the increase of wealth and prosperity of the country, was the augmentation of their own revenues by heavier and heavier taxation of the people. Their revenue officers vied with one another in raising the Government demand on land; and their great achievement and boast was, how greatly they had raised the revenues above what the previous rulers were able to obtain from the people. In every new district which came under their charge, while cultivation declined from want of incentive to the people to work, Government revenues went up within the first two or three years, to two or three times of what they had been before. Large proprietors of land, who had formerly provided capital and initiative for the improvement of cultivation, and had constructed and kept in repair large irrigation works, were set aside; and their lands were either sold by public auctions to the highest bidders of rents, or were let out directly by the Government to petty cultivators and peasants, on greatly enhanced rents. In this manner, the

capital which had formerly been employed on the improvement of cultivation and increase of wealth of the country was withdrawn from its useful employment to swell the revenues of the Government. From an employment where it had multiplied several times within one year, the wealth of the country was diverted to support the waste of the Company's Government, and to feed the insatiable greed of the vast army of the Company's servants, who amassed great fortunes from the ruin of the country.

As one of the distinguished servants of the Company of the earlier days of the nineteenth century said:—

‘With reference to its economical effects upon the condition of India, the tribute of Great Britain is by far the most objectionable feature in our existing policy. Taxes spent in the country from which they are raised are totally different in their effects from taxes raised in one country and spent in another. In the former case the taxes collected from the population at large are paid away to the Government, through whose expenditure they are again returned to the industrious classes. They occasion a different distribution but no loss of national income; and hence it is that in countries advanced in civilization, in which the productive powers of man are augmented by mechanical contrivances and a judicious use of the powers of Nature, an enormous taxation may be realized with singularly little pressure on the community. But the case is wholly different

when the taxes are not spent in the country from which they are realized. In this case they constitute no mere transfer of a portion of the national income from one set of citizens to another, but an absolute loss and extinction of the whole amount withdrawn from the country. As regards its effects on national production the whole amount might as well be thrown into the sea as transferred to another country, for no portion of it will return from the latter to the taxed country in any shape whatever. Such is the nature of the tribute we have so long extracted from India.'

A company of English traders built up the great Indian empire by a series of accidents. From the outset their sovereign powers, which should have been rightly exercised for the protection and amelioration of the people entrusted by the Providence to their charge, were used by them for the exploitation of the people. The company were at last deprived of their powers by the Crown of Great Britain, who acclaimed itself as the Champion of the oppressed people. An era of hope and goodwill started. But alas! the transfer of power from the Company to the Crown exposed the oppressed country to greater and unrestricted greed of the whole nation of manufacturers and merchants in place of the previous exactions of a limited number of people, acting under some sorts of checks and restraints. Whereas, formerly, all important public acts of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, and of their agents and servants, were subjected

to severe criticism of the British public and to the surveillance of the British Parliament and Ministers of the Crown, now the government of this great Empire passed into the hands of a small oligarchy of Civil Servants, presided over by a single individual in the person of the Viceroy, and subject to no checks or control, except the nominal supervision of the Secretary of State for India, in whose keeping the affairs of India became pawns to satisfy the greed of every powerful trading organisation of Great Britain who found themselves in a position to exert political pressure on him.

The fault of the Company of traders was that they failed to realize, even long after they became rulers of India, that their interests as sovereigns of a great Empire were identical with those of the people over whom they ruled, namely to promote their welfare and prosperity. They regarded the acquisition of territory only as an additional means of making large profits by the extension of their trade, and by extracting as great a portion of the produce of the country from the people as possible, in the shape of taxes. Their agents and servants, whilst administering to the cupidity of their masters, carried on trade and exploitation of the people on their own account on an extensive scale. But both the masters and servants, as long as they could, kept other competitors out of the field. They acted the true shopkeepers towards their subjects, to sell as dear and to buy as cheap as possible; but they acted as monopolists by keeping out other competitors; and in this lay

India's safety from utter ruin.

Even when the East India Company ceased to be traders after 1833, their interests as shareholders of a joint stock concern, from which they expected to make dividends, constituted them as some sort of the guardians of Indian interests, against the unchecked trading greed of their own countrymen. But when the administration of the country passed from the Company to the Crown, India became a free and open field of exploitation for the whole of the British nation. The discovery of the gold fields of Mexico had not tempted the avidity of so many adventurers of Europe, as did the prospects of rich harvests of Indian wealth, tempt the greed of merchants and adventurers of Great Britain. Iron merchants, cloth merchants, salt merchants, investors of money, builders of railways, owners of steamships, and, in fact, traders and adventurers of all descriptions, applied for and obtained valuable profiteering concessions in India; and woe to the Secretary of State and his political party, who should stand between the trading rapacity of his countrymen and the rights of poor Indians! India was deprived of the right to manufacture a yard of cotton fabrics duty free, because it interfered with the profitable manufacture of cloth in Lancashire. India had to construct a vast network of railways, because it provided profitable field of investment to British capitalists, and profitable employments to British engineers. In fact there was not a single branch of trade and investment in

India, in which the British trader and investor did not acquire valuable rights.

Indian industry decayed, and her capital and enterprise languished under such heavy disabilities. But in proportion as the means of the people deteriorated, and with this their power to resist arbitrary demands of the Government and trade pressure of the British people, they were subjected to heavier taxation by the Government, and heavier imports of British goods. At every recurring settlement, Government demand on land was raised, and, even between the settlements, pretexts were found to impose fresh dues and cesses on the cultivators. People of the towns could not escape the attentions of the tax collector; and as early as 1860, a new tax, called the income tax, was imposed on the townspeople, which has gone on increasing at short intervals; until now it forms a very substantial portion of the Government of India's revenues.

But the increase of Government revenues by these and other devices of directly taxing the people, did not keep pace with the increasing expenditure of the civil and military departments of the Government, and the ever-increasing Home Charges. During the last thirty years of the nineteenth century the price of silver continually fell from about 60d to an ounce in 1870 to about 30d in 1895; and with this continuous fall in the price of silver, the value or the purchasing power of the rupee steadily came down to nearly half its value in that period, and the prices of commodities became

doubled. The deterioration in the value of the rupee, as far as Government revenues were affected, was made good by the Government by raising their demand on land and other taxes, proportionally to the fall in the value of the rupee; but as the Government of India had to make their ever-increasing remittances of Home Charges to England in sterling, and the price of gold had remained fairly steady during the period, they had to incur continually increasing expenditure, expressed in rupees, to obtain every pound of sterling in gold in England.

Instead of trying to alter the basis of payments to England, in rupees in place of sterling, the Government of India proposed to artificially raise the value of the rupee, in order to overcome the difficulty of incurring increasing expenditure to obtain sterling for Home Charges. But as such a measure would have had the effect of altering the basis of all contracts in India, and of causing still further increase of taxation on the people, in addition to the increases made by the Government owing to the fall in the value of the rupee, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Treasury authorities in England, turned down the proposal of the Government of India. Ultimately, however, the British Government could not resist the temptation of squeezing the people of India still more tightly, if they could do so without resorting to apparent increase of taxation; and, on the representations of the Government of India, they appointed a committee presided

over by Lord Herschell, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, to enquire into the Currency system of India. On the recommendation of the Herschell Committee, the value of the rupee was fixed in relation to the sterling at 1s. 4d, while its real value was 1s. 1½d, in 1893; and Indian mints were closed to the coinage of rupee for private individuals. In this manner the Government of India managed to increase their real revenues by 20 per cent, and people had to part with a fifth part more of their produce than before, to pay Government taxes, which nominally remained unchanged.

The cumulative economic effect of the unjust trade policy of Great Britain, and heavy taxation of the people by the Government, both directly by the increase of taxation and indirectly by artificial increase in the value of the rupee, was disastrous. With trade and industry of the country continually declining, sources of national wealth continually narrowing, Government share of the produce of land continually increasing, and great and ever-increasing portions of the revenues of the country being drained out of the land, never to return in any shape; indeed it would have been miraculous, if India had not been reduced to the most miserable depths of poverty, as it actually was at the end of the nineteenth century.

A disastrous famine devastated a large part of the country in 1897. Millions died of starvation; so much so that villages and streets of large towns were filled

with the corpses of the people, and the Government had to undertake special measures to remove the corpses in cart-loads, and dispose of them by burning them in large heaps or throwing them into rivers and streams. Hardly had the havoc caused by this famine subsided, when another yet more terrible and more widespread famine broke out in 1900, and destroyed millions of human lives throughout the length and breadth of the country. This famine lasted for three years. But while the Government devised some measures for giving relief to the sufferers by starting famine works and relief camps, they did not tackle the root cause of famines—the chronic poverty of the people caused by the taxation and trade policies of the Government. While millions were dying of starvation in the country, wheat and rice were being exported out of the land in undiminished quantities to support the ruinous foreign trade of the country, and to pay for the enormous Home Charges, which had risen from about 4 million pounds in 1857 to 17 million pounds in 1900.

The extravagance and waste of the Civil and Military Departments of the Government continued unabated; and in addition, they undertook new Imperialistic wars outside the borders of India. The disastrous famines, after a short pause, were followed up by a terrible outbreak of plague in 1905, which took its toll of millions all over the land; and this calamity was soon succeeded by yet another severe famine, which in turn destroyed millions. The price of wheat was a little

over Rs. 2 per maund in the wheat growing districts of the Punjab in 1905, which figure was never again touched until the recent drop in the prices of commodities. After the cheap year of 1905, more or less famine conditions continued until the beginning of the last Great War, which unavoidably grew worse during the War, and remained so, until the severe trade depression which began in 1929, and was designated by economists and officials as the economic ruin of India, brought promise of relief to the suffering millions.

But the actual relief to the suffering and starving millions though in sight, did not come, owing as has been already explained, to the unfair trade policy and propaganda of the Government, unduly heavy taxation of the people, and the persistence of the Government in maintaining, against heavy odds, an unnatural ratio of exchange. In the lengthy Financial Report of Mr. Layton, covering over seventy closely printed pages of the II Volume of the Statutory Commission's Report, nor even in the two volumes of the report itself, is there a single word, which even by implication shows the slightest concern of the author of the Financial Report, or of the learned Commissioners themselves, for the economic condition of the people of India. The Commissioners, after making lengthy dissertations on the shortcomings of Indians in the spheres of education, female reforms, communal relations, and such other matters, arrived at their cherished conclusions of the necessity of maintaining Britain's control over the

finances, administration, and military affairs of India unimpaired, for all future ages; whilst their financial assessor Mr. Layton, was only concerned about devising schemes for broadening the basis of taxation of India forthwith. It was indeed a strange enquiry into the question of the grant of a measure of self-Government to India, in which all the powers of destructive reasoning of the able and learned enquirers were employed by them in shelving and confusing the issues they were supposed to clarify; and a strange set of financial and taxation proposals, in which the economic condition of the people, proposed to be further taxes, did not form the subject-matter of the enquiry.

Mr. Layton accepted Rs. 80 as the annual income per head of the population of India against £100 as the annual income per head of the population of Great Britain; and on these assumptions, by comparing the annual Governmental revenues of India and of Great Britain, he arrived at the conclusion that the taxation percentage of India worked out at 8 per cent against 20 per cent of Great Britain. From this disparity in the taxation percentages of India and of Great Britain, he arrived at the further conclusion that the proportion of income of the nation which is taken by the tax gatherer in India is low, compared to that of Great Britain; and to lend support to his arguments, he gave the example of Japan, where the standard of living is low, and yet the taxation percentage is 20 per cent. From these assumptions Mr. Layton felt convinced that

there was scope for further taxation of the people of India; and proceeded with his elaborate scheme, whereby an addition of 20 million pounds to the tax proceeds of India could be made within the next ten years. To hoodwink Indians and to gain their sympathy for the proposals for the increase of taxation, he made the pathetic statement, that whereas the military expenditure of India was 2 per cent of the national income of India, against $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the national income of Great Britain, the amount spent in India upon education was $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent as against $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent spent in Great Britain. From these figures and such reasoning he drew the following inferences:—

“The mass of the people are extremely poor”.

“She is incurring expenditure on the primary functions of government, such as defence and the maintenance of law and order, as high in proportion to her wealth as western nations.”

“The insufficiency of India’s revenues to provide adequately for the latter classes (education etc.), of expenditure has been a factor of political importance, in that it has created dissatisfaction with the very small headway that it has been possible to make in the direction of social amelioration under the Reforms.”

After this Mr. Layton discussed the question of questions—the possibility of further taxation. He considered that taxation may be the only practicable means of creating a better and more secure livelihood. And he concluded this discussion by affirming that, it

was both possible and desirable to improve the economic and social condition of the Indian people by a substantial increase in expenditure on the "Nation-Building" services, and secondly that it was possible, subject to the conditions mentioned by him (that Indian revenues be not in future indiscriminately spent etc.) to raise additional revenues for this purpose.

After deducing from his reasoning that the mass of people were extremely poor, that military expenditure was unduly heavy, and that expenditure on social services was poor, and indeed non-existent in many directions; the author of the financial report conveniently forgot to discuss the problem of the poverty of the masses, and the feasibility of the reduction of heavy military and other wasteful expenditure; and arrived at his pre-conceived conclusions that it was both possible and desirable to increase expenditure on the 'Nation Building' services by increase of taxation.

The statistical methods of computing the per-capita income of the people of a mainly agricultural country, like India, are highly misleading. India derives no income from her investments abroad, nor practically any income from the exports of the products of her industries other than agriculture, nor yet from her shipping, banking, and insurance activities. Almost all her wealth and income consist in the produce of land; and this it is which gives life and impetus to all industrial, trading, and other activities of the country. If, therefore, we can determine with some degree of

approximation the total agricultural income of the country, and add to it incomes from other sources of primary production, such as incomes from fisheries, mines and forests, we get all the data required for computing the per-capita income of the country. All the operations of Industry and trade merely represent different movements of the wealth of primary production, and as such these do not affect the main balance-sheet of India. Our fundamental equation for computing the per-head income of the country thus reduces to the simple relationship of the aggregate of incomes from all sources of primary production on one side, and the number of inhabitants on the other side. The total sown area of British India is about 250 million acres, and this at forty rupees per acre average income from land, including income from valuable commercial crops, like jute and cotton, gives 1,000 crores of rupees as the direct agricultural income of British India. To this have to be added the incomes from the dairy produce, poultry, carcasses and hides and skins of animals, fisheries, mines, and income from about ninety million acres of forest areas in British India. The aggregate income from all these and some other minor items may be taken at 250 crores of rupees; or the total income of 250 million inhabitants of British India is 1,250 crores of rupees. This give us the per-capita income of India at Rs. 50.

Even taking the figure of Rs. 80 as the average come per head of the inhabitants of India,

one-seventeenth of the income per head of the inhabitants of Great Britain, at the artificially raised value of the rupee, and would be almost one-thirtieth, even with the present depreciated value of sterling in relation to gold, if exchange were rightly allowed to adjust itself in conformity with the commodity prices. This great and startling disparity between the national incomes of two countries owing allegiance to the same Sovereign, should have much more appropriately directed the attention and ingenuity of Mr. Layton to devise means of lessening the disparity, than his attempt to perpetuate or even to increase it, by suggesting proposals for more heavily taxing a poverty-stricken people. With thirty times the income and 20 per cent of it taken away from them by the tax collector, the people of Great Britain are still twenty-six times better off than are the people of India, with extremely poor incomes, and as high as 8 per cent of it claimed from them by the tax collector.

The taxation percentage of India is very much higher than 8 per cent if it is properly computed on the basis of fifty rupees per-capita income of the inhabitants. But even if it be taken as correct, the people of India part with a great portion of their meagre food—their very life's blood—to the tax collector, whilst the people of Great Britain part with a small portion of the superfluous wealth to him. The people of Great Britain get a profuse disposal of wealth produced by others; so, it does not really matter to them, if they part with a large proportion of this acquired profusion

to the tax collector. The outturn and rewards of the employments of the people of Great Britain are greatly augmented by mechanical means; and out of this artificially augmented reward of labour, people can conveniently afford to pay one-fifth to the tax collector who, in addition to rendering great social services to them, helps them to realize that reward from their many colonies and dependencies. As has been already remarked, an enormous taxation may be realized in manufacturing countries with singularly little pressure on the community. This explains the heavy taxation percentage of Japan. Although the standard of living of those people is low compared to that of the people of Great Britain, they are still several times better off than the people of India; and it is much easier to part with a great portion from profusion than to part with even a little from actual dearth.

Thus the people of India are by no means lightly taxed compared to the people of Great Britain, as Mr. Layton imagined or tried to make out. They are extremely heavily taxed, or even cruelly taxed, considering their poor resources.

Half net assets as tax or revenue is the general principle of taxation on incomes from land to India; so a tax of half the profits on agricultural incomes, even if it be accepted that the principle of half net assets is respected by the settlement officers, is not a light one. In actual practice, as it came out during the Bardoli Land tax agitation, the government almost always

attempt to take away much more than half the agricultural profits as their tax. Moreover, there are no courts of law, where people having grievances against land assessments may seek redress. The settlement officer announces the assessment, and that assessment seals the fate of the cultivators of a large district for twenty or thirty years.

The arbitrary ratio of exchange of the government, during the recent fall of prices of commodities, automatically more than doubled the value of land taxes; and hit the cultivating classes much more severely than all the taxes proposed by Mr. Layton could have done. If the fall in the prices of silver had tended to some increase in the prices of commodities, then we would have taken it as real depreciation in the value of silver relatively to other commodities; and there would have been justification for the Government, either to increase the nominal rates of taxation or artificially to raise the value of the rupee. But the prices of commodities went down only as expressed in gold, and not otherwise. Thus the relationship of the price of wheat, for example, to the price of silver did not materially change. It was, therefore, not actual depreciation in the value of silver, but heavy appreciation in the value of gold, that caused the recent apparent fall in the prices of commodities. For the Government of India, therefore, to keep up the value of the rupee at three times its actual worth as expressed in gold, while the prices of all commodities retained their old relationship to the

price of silver, was tantamount to depriving the Indian agriculturist of a very great portion of his agricultural produce. Mr. Layton's proposals for taxing agricultural incomes apparently fell far short of what the Government of India have been already doing by their exchange policy.

Mr. Layton would therefore, have done much better, and would have rendered a real service both to India and to Great Britain, if he had discussed the means of increasing the wealth and resources of this country by relieving the people of some of the ruinous taxation, than to make the ridiculous assertions that taxation may be the only practicable means of creating a better and more secure livelihood; and that it is both possible and desirable to improve the economic and social condition of the people of India by a substantial increase in expenditure and taxation. Has any country ever prospered by throwing away greater and greater portions of her wealth to support unproductive governmental machinery without first strengthening and improving the sources of producing wealth? And can India prosper by the ever-increasing impoverishment of her productive classes by increased taxation and denudation of the people by the Government by so many other devices?

Great Britain is an immensely rich country, and the value of military and naval protection to her inhabitants is commensurate with their riches; whilst the majority of the people of India are extremely poor, to

whom peace brings no especial blessings, which war will deprive them of. For this reason alone, even if we disregard the natural advantage of impregnable land frontiers; expenditure on the protection and defence of India, as far as the mass of people are concerned, should be a smaller proportion of their incomes than the people of Great Britain incur on their protection and defence. Even assuming that defence is relatively as valuable to the people of India as it is to the people of Great Britain, then the military expenditure of India should in no case be more than 15 per cent of the total of Central and Provincial revenues of the country; or it should not be more than thirty crores of rupees. Likewise the expenditure on civil administration of the government is easily capable of being greatly reduced and savings from the present civil and military expenditure, rather than proceeds from fresh taxation of an already overtaxed people should support and exalt the so-called 'Nation Building Departments', the importance of which has dawned on the Government and its spokesmen only in recent years.

Currency manipulation is one of the most potent instruments with the governments of modern industrial countries for the purposes of stimulating industry, correcting adverse balances of trade, and attracting capital from abroad. If, as in previous ages, trade between different countries had consisted of honest exchange of objectified labour time for labour time, then artificial manipulations of currencies by

industrial nations could not stimulate industry or trade and could not attract capital from other countries. It is because modern trade, at any rate trade between so-called civilized nations and eastern countries, is not barter or honest exchange of labour time for labour time but an elaborate system of mercantile fraud, that the industrial civilization displays its superiority by its skill at cheating honest people by means of well-timed depreciations, appreciations, inflations, and deflations of currencies.

The policy of the Government of India to attempt to maintain the high ratio of exchange of 2sh. against bitter protests of the whole country, when the natural ratio of exchange should have been less than 1s. 6d. in 1920, with the avowed purpose of making the currency system of India proof against any possible rise in the price of silver, depleted all the gold reserves of the Government of India, which had been built up in London as the result of heavy exports from India during the war, and denuded the country of enormous sums of money, which were exported out of India under the stimulus of the high ratio of exchange. They could not sustain this artificial ratio of exchange, in spite of the heavy backing of reserves, by selling reverse councils and enormous quantities of gold week after week; and, in less than an year, the government had to withdraw from the market. When the prices of commodities rose as a result of the inevitable fall in the ratio of exchange at the end of 1920, they revised, on a lavish

scale, the salaries and conditions of service of all their civil and military employees; and as they could not meet all the extra expenditure involved in their great scheme of making the 'Conditions of government services attractive,' by means of additional taxation, they resorted to the ruinous policy of heavy borrowings, both in India and in Great Britain, to meet the current expenses of the state.

In the years 1921 and 1922, their military expenditure alone exceeded the entire revenues of the Central Government; and if their receipts from customs, income tax, and railways had not steadily gone up during next few years, it looked as if the government of the country would have to be run in future on borrowed money. However, the determined policy of the Government to encourage the import trade of India, in pursuance of which they once again fixed the ratio of exchange arbitrarily at 1s. 6d. in 1926, against the bitter opposition of all the elected members of the Indian legislature and of the entire agricultural and commercial population of the country, led to a very great increase of imports, from 90 million pounds in value in 1923, to nearly 150 million pounds in 1928; and with the increased receipts, mainly from customs, the Government of India were at last able to balance their budget in 1929 for the first time after the war. But this luxury of a balanced budget was of a very short duration. The 1930-31 receipts, instead of bringing to the Government a small surplus, as originally

budgeted for, resulted in an actual deficit of nearly 12 million pounds in the revenues of the Central Government, an aggregate deficit of an equal amount on the provincial revenues, and a similar loss on railway receipts. Still these successive heavy deficits after 1931 did not induce the Government to make any substantial reduction in their civil and military and other expenditure. They merely contented themselves by throwing the blame for the unsatisfactory state of their finances on the Civil Disobedience Movement, and got the necessary legislation passed through the Assembly or certified by the Viceroy, to make good the deficits by additional taxation, at a time when agriculture, trade and industry of the country were at their lowest ebb.

But these deficits in revenues, and the determination of the government to make them good by additional taxation, and not by making any substantial retrenchments in their lavish expenditure, as were urgently called for, do not disclose the worst aspect of the Government's financial policy. As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, they arbitrarily fixed the exchange value of the rupee at 1s. 6d. against the almost unanimous opposition of the whole country. This high ratio of exchange gave undue encouragement to imports into the country; but as, in spite of undue encouragement to imports, the value of exports from India was always substantially in excess of the value of imports, and as also the difference between the artificial and real values of the rupee was not so heavy as to encourage wholesale

exportation of Capital out of India, the actual remittances of money from India to England were not very heavy between 1926 and 1929, and the Government were able to sustain this artificial ratio. After 1929, however, there was a steep and continuous fall in the price of silver for about two years, till in September, 1931, the value of silver in the rupee was less than one third of the artificially raised exchange price of the rupee. This great difference between the nominal price of the rupee and the actual value of silver in it, brought down the rupee prices of staple commodities, such as wheat, rice, cotton, oil seeds etc., to less than half of their prices of 1929; and, by reason of the fact that it became highly advantageous to exchange rupees into sterling, huge sums were exported from India to England. The prices of commodities in 1931 were at least one-third lower than they were in 1914, before the war, whereas the governmental revenues and expenditure were more than twice of what they were in 1914; so we can well imagine the miserable plight of the people of India who in 1931 had to part with three times as much of the produce of land as they did in 1914 to the tax collector. The Government, all the while, pleaded their inability to reduce their expenditure and taxation. In fact they greatly enhanced their taxes even during the period of unprecedented fall in the prices of commodities.

As for the export of capital from India to England, although the balance of trade even in 1930, in spite of

the low prices of commodities caused by the Government's exchange policy, was greatly in favour of India, yet on account of heavy remittances of money from India to England on private account, the whole of the balance of trade in favour of India was wiped out, and the Government of India had, in addition to their heavy borrowings in India by means of Treasury Bills, to borrow 30 million pounds in England to keep the Secretary of State in funds, to enable him to meet the liabilities of heavy remittances to England.

In his Budget Speech of 1930-31 the Finance Member tried to defend the deflation of currency and exchange policies of the Government, by supposing the value of the rupee unalterable, and then justifying the reduction in the currency of the country, in order to make it difficult for the people to obtain rupees for purposes of export of capital. First to create conditions highly favourable for the export of capital from India to England, and then to make pretence of trying to stop that export was indeed a plausible defence of the exchange and currency policies of the Government! And when it suited the Government after the collapse of the British sterling in September 1931, that large quantities of export of gold should be made from India to Great Britain, in order to sustain even the reduced value of the British Currency, they reversed their currency policy and inflated the paper currency of India beyond what any one in India had ever desired. The Finance Member argued that it was necessary to maintain a fixed

ratio of exchange, because it makes the currency system fool proof and knave proof, and the London business world does not like uncertainty. Does the Indian agriculturist like to be defrauded of the whole of his produce, season after season, in the shape of greatly enhanced rents and taxes, which such a high ratio of exchange brings about? If the nominal prices of commodities had gone up above what they were in 1929, as the result of the Government letting the rupee drift down to its natural value of its silver contents, then the Government would have been justified in raising their taxes and expenditure proportionally to the rise in prices. But, for the Government to arbitrarily raise the purchasing power of the rupee in order to extract more and more from the people in taxes amounted to nothing short of defrauding the poor and hard-pressed agricultural classes.

In 1931, when the trade depression was at its climax, at a meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers, held at Delhi, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas moved the following resolutions:—

(A) 'The Federation views with great apprehension the financial and currency policy of the Government, which had had the effect of, (1) reducing the purchasing power of the people, (2) increasing the liability of every debtor including the Government, (3) creating artificial stringency at even unnatural periods during the last few years in the money markets, both at home and abroad, (4) frittering away the gold

resources in the Currency reserves which threatens in the near future the convertibility of the currency of the country.

(B) 'The Federation is of the opinion that unless immediate steps are taken to (1) make a drastic retrenchment in every form of national expenditure, both in the Central and provincial governments, (2) generally to regulate the Currency and fiscal policy of the Government in a manner calculated to promote the productivity of the country, (3) stop further efforts at maintaining the value of the rupee at 18d., the situation cannot but develop alarmingly, causing an irreparable harm to the economic structure of the country.

(C) 'The Federation repeats its emphatic protest against the fact that in spite of its warning during the last few years, a policy diametrically opposed to the unequivocally expressed responsible Indian opinion has been pursued; and is amazed at the Government's determined persistence in that policy on the eve of the transfer of finance and commerce to popular control.'

Another talented speaker, Mr. Khaitan, remarked that, for the last ten years, it was not the exchange which had lived for the country, but the country which had lived for the exchange. India had been mortgaged in order to maintain the 18d. ratio, in the interests of the city of London. Today the people who had frittered away the gold resources of India, depleted the currency reserves, and floated loans at ruinous rates of interests, claimed that in order to keep India's credit

unimpaired, the financial control should not be transferred to India.

The Finance Member had no real reply to make to these grave charges against the financial and currency policies of the Government; and, although he spoke for nearly one hour, the sum and substance of his speech was that the Government would not, as apparently they could not, face an enquiry into the question of exchange. He offered to assist the Indian Commercial classes if they appointed a committee to see how to promote in a better way the stability of exchange, that is, if the commercial classes would consent to be a party to the systematic despoilation of their countrymen.

The Finance Member asked the Chamber to take a lesson from the fact that Indian securities began to depreciate from November 1929, from which time apparently the outside world began to feel that a big change was coming over India. That uncertainty was worsened by the Civil Disobedience Movement. Until the constitutional question was settled it would not be removed. He appealed to Indian Commercial leaders to do nothing to create doubts and lack of confidence during the period of transition till a new government was established. The Finance Member further said that the way to get over the abnormal circumstances was not to juggle with the exchange, and try to promote the interests of one class, be that agriculturist, at the expense of all classes. He concluded by appealing to the Chamber not to ask the Government to wreck the

future of the country by asking them to do something which the Government knew to be wrong.

There can be no doubt as to whose interests the Finance Member had at heart in insisting on maintaining such a high ratio and stability of exchange. On the Finance Member's own admission the agriculturist class would benefit if the exchange were allowed to have its own course; and the commercial classes were crying for it. So it is impossible to see which were all those classes in India which benefited by the policy of exchange of the Government; a policy so well founded that the Government have always been afraid to expose it to the least little public scrutiny. The Finance Member's concluding pathetic appeal would have had the ring of sincerity in it, if he had requested the Chamber not to ask the Government to wreck the future of the business world of London, by asking them to do something which the Government knew would be disastrous to that great business community. By professing solicitude for the future of India, he exposed himself and the Government of India to the additional charge of hypocrisy, without in the least explaining the charges levelled by the various speakers against the financial and currency policy of the Government.

The Finance Member wanted the chamber to take the lesson from the fact that Indian securities began to depreciate from November 1929, from which time apparently the outside world began to feel that a big change was coming over India. That uncertainty was

worsened by the Civil Disobedience Movement. Whether the outside world began to feel or not that a big change was coming over India; the date mentioned by the Finance Member coincided with the time when the prices of silver and all other commodities, relatively to gold, began to drop very rapidly, and when the outside world began to realize that the exchange policy of the Government of India, which fixed the value of the Indian Currency greatly in excess of its real worth, could not be long sustained by them, in spite of the heavy reserves at the backing of the exchange policy. The Civil Disobedience Movement, by exposing this colossal jugglery of exchange, might have worsened the difficulties of the Government; but it did nothing more. The only party to blame for the difficulties of the Government, if the Government had really any difficulties, were the Government themselves who, getting nervous at the impending changes over India, threw off all restraint in their policy of exploitation of the people; and acting with the haste and lack of caution of a business man on the verge of bankruptcy, totally destroyed the confidence of the public in their honesty and sincerity. Indian commercial leaders, whose interests, as usually understood by the people, are always identical with those of the Government, have never done anything to create doubts and lack of confidence in the Government. It is the Government who have created doubts and lack of confidence in the past, and are doing so now with all their power; so they themselves will do well to take the lesson

which the Finance Member intended for the Indian Commercial leaders. The Government must drastically reform their currency and exchange policies, unless they would convert public doubts and lack of confidence into a panic, and reduce their notes and securities into scraps of waste.

In season and out of season a great fuss is made by the Government about the necessity of maintaining India's credit unimpaired in the outside world, in the best interests of India herself; but they never explain how the credit can be best maintained, and in what manner India's credit in the outside world will benefit India. One way of maintaining credit for any individual, as well as for any country, is to entrust some articles of value to the person or the country with whom credit is sought to be maintained. Surely, the Government of India's currency and exchange policy which has so seriously depleted the gold standard and currency reserves of India in England, is not the best means of maintaining India's credit in the London money market. The Government of India had to pay bankrupt rates of interest to borrow money in the London market in 1930 and 1931. Their 6 per cent loan of 10 million pounds which was floated in London in 1930, while the Bank of England rate was $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, was not fully subscribed, and sold at 2 per cent discount within a few days of the closing of subscriptions to the loan. On account of the heavy inflation of currency in Great Britain, and heavy exports of gold from India to

London, their borrowings in London after 1930 have been more successful. But when the exports of gold from India to London stop, as must necessarily happen, and the thriftless policy of the Indian Government still continues, they will not be able to borrow money in London on any terms. Their reserves in England will be further depleted and their cherished credit of India in the London money market will be ruined.

But the second and the more important point to be considered is, in what manner India's credit in the outside world can benefit her. When a person or a country lends money to another, it is not the metal pieces or the scraps of paper which the lender gives or the borrower receives. It is the right which the lender possesses and which he assigns to the borrower, of buying or acquiring some useful things, be those things articles of food and consumption, materials of manufactures, some machinery, tools, and useful instruments, or some other useful commodities or manufactured articles. The rate of interest is determined on the one hand by the credit and the urgency of necessity of the borrower for the stock and materials which the lender can give; and on the other hand, by the redundancy of the stock and materials which the lender cannot or does not want to make use of himself. If the borrower has to pay a very heavy rate of interest, it is evident that his credit with the lender must be very low, that his necessity for the stock and materials which the lender can give him must

be very great, and lastly that the lender must not be anxious to lend, that is, he must not have a great redundancy of stock and materials which the borrower wants. Thus, a very high rate of interest implies very low credit and great necessity on the part of the borrower, and indifference on the part of the lender. I have already referred to the cause of low credit of India in the London money market in the year 1930-31; and how if the currency policy of the Indian Government is persisted in, and the exports of gold from India stop, it might almost become impossible for India to borrow in London.

As for the benefit which India can derive by her good credit in the outside world, it must be in proportion to her urgency of necessity for the stock and materials which the outside world can give her. India has no need to import food and materials of manufactures; as she, at all times, produces food and materials of manufactures for all her requirements, and has even surplus available for export. India does not stand in need of modern machinery of manufactures; as from the discussion in the chapter on trade and manufactures, we saw that the establishment of large manufactures in India will not conduce to healthy economic development of the country and prosperity of the masses. For healthy economic development of the country, in addition to the need for agricultural development and reforms, it is necessary to revive small indigenous industries, which, by widening the field of employment for

the large unemployed or insufficiently employed population of the country, will diffuse wealth and prosperity among the masses. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of a single article, which India urgently needs to get from the outside world for her development; and which, even if urgently needed by her, the traditionally skilful artisans and manufacturers of India could not learn to manufacture within a short time. Therefore, for her economic development India does not require unimpaired credit in the outside world; simply because there are almost no commodities or articles of fundamental utility to India, which the outside world can offer to her.

If, therefore, it is sought to maintain India's credit in the London market unimpaired, only to facilitate export of capital from India, or to increase India's indebtedness to Great Britain by other methods of exploitation, then the sooner India's credit in the London market is ruined, the better it would be for future prosperity of India, and the honour, good name, and real prosperity of Great Britain herself. If it be to facilitate imports of articles of luxury or even to facilitate imports of gold and silver into India, that it is considered necessary to maintain India's credit in the outside world, then the less credit India has abroad, the better it would be for her internal prosperity. A few people who can afford luxuries have no right to indulge in them when great numbers of their countrymen are insufficiently fed and clothed, and are wretchedly lodged.

And, even if their surplus wealth enables them, and their inclinations prompt them to live lives of luxury, then the least amends they can make to the poor people living around them, is to procure articles of luxury from their neighbourhood; so that their great expense feeds, clothes, and lodges their own countrymen. To give even ready money to the outside world for procuring articles of luxury, when poverty holds sway over the entire land, would be reprehensible folly; but to procure articles of luxury on credit would be sinful. To obtain gold and silver on credit, which luckily no one would give to India, would be even less excusable than to obtain articles of comforts and luxury on credit; because the latter give comforts and enjoyments to people, and the desire of people for comforts and enjoyments may furnish some excuse for obtaining them even in an undesirable manner. But gold and silver do not give anything but empty satisfaction to mean and greedy spirits; and to mortgage the sustenance and means of future generations for the mean pleasure of hoarding precious metals would be highly sinful. If gold and silver were required for the circulation of commodities within the country, then greater the abundance and exchange of commodities in any country greater the use of those metals; and part of the actual abundance in the country should pay for the price of those metals, rather than credit of the country, that is the sustenance and means of future generations. Similarly, if gold and silver were required by the people for purposes of

decoration and art and for making ornaments, then it should be the surplus wealth of the country and not her credit, which should buy them.

It is, therefore, obviously not the need of India to seek credit of the outside world for her economic development, but the redundancy of stock and materials with the outsiders, and their anxiety to increase India's indebtedness by all possible means, that makes them solicitous of maintaining India's credit unimpaired. Their stock and materials consist of worthless trinkets and it is for the future continuous disposal of these to India, and for the future continuous exportation of capital or the remittances of heavy Home Charges from India to England that they want to maintain India's credit, and want to extract guarantees and safeguards before making over control of the finances of India to Indians.

COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNALISM IN INDIA

Religious-mindedness of Indians, and antagonism between India's two great communities, the Hindus and the Muslims, founded on their opposing religious beliefs and principles, are said to be among the reasons of India's backward condition. So far as the simple habits of her people, born of their religious-mindedness, have enabled English traders and other clever people to exploit her vast resources, and so far as the carefully worked up antagonism between the two great communities has enabled a handful of Englishmen to govern the vast population of her three hundred and fifty million people, for such a long time and without experiencing any serious trouble, the religious tendencies of Indians are certainly a great cause of India's backwardness. But, if anything has sustained Indians in their great poverty and adversity brought about by the exploitation of their country by foreign traders, and, if anything will carry them through their misfortunes, it is the religious feelings of the Hindus and the Muslims which give them contentment and resignation in adversity, and hopes of the future. Whereas, only the superficial prosperity of the western nations annihilated all their Christian virtues of honest work and charity, and a

most distant vision of adversity appears to overwhelm them, the Hindus and the Muslims never lost their charitable instincts through ages of prosperity, nor have they now miserably succumbed to adverse circumstances.

If the mild, gentle, and peace-loving nature of the Hindus, together with the durability of their religious institutions, which have emerged almost intact through the storms of many ages and onslaughts and inroads of many religions, were any proofs of the excellence of the cardinal principles of the Hindu religion, then Hinduism should stand supreme in the present day confusion of cults and creeds.

However, the western nations, especially the British, mistaking their material glamour, as evidenced by their tall churches and gilded domes, for the superiority of their religious institutions, give credit to present day Christianity for virtues which belonged to the best days of her martyrs; and are apt to represent Hinduism as a collection of myths and superstitions, representative of the inferior civilization of those who profess it. They forget that the great Hindu sages laid down thousands of years ago, immutable laws for the conduct and guidance of the highly civilized society of the Hindus, when they themselves were still barbarians; and that the present day inheritor of those laws, with his emaciated body and scanty clothing, still carries contentment and peace in his looks, whereas they themselves, in their zenith of prosperity, have only turmoil and confusion in their brains. Their own religion, having been

banished from their midst by their overfed people, now enjoys only a state protected existence, and makes its weekly appearance in the gaudy Sunday church services, or in the impatient looks of the people, waiting for the arrival of the authorized hour of opening of the public bars, on the Sabbath evening.

In its long and tortuous career through diverse and varied soils of Hindustan, the stream of Hinduism, which issued forth from its sources in the Himalayas ages ago, limpid, narrow and forceful, has gathered turbidity and volume, as it has lost its impetuosity; but its slow-moving waters still retain their inherent purity, and come out in sparkling clearness, when passed through a thin filter of reason to remove the suspended impurities. In its pure conception, Hinduism has the same message of faith, hope, charity, and self-abnegation for mankind, as it conveyed to them thousands of years ago. Even in its turbid condition, the waters of its mainstream are refreshing and sweet, and impart healthy vigour and placidity to those who drink of them. The various off-shoots of Hinduism—its many castes and creeds—essentially draw their supplies from the mainstream. But, although, their waters lend fertility and life wherever they go, yet on account of the distance from the mother-stream, they proportionately lose force and vitality, and sometimes become even displeasing to the eye, from their muddy appearance. The most muddy channels of Hinduism, however, continue to have their little share of fresh supplies from the main

current, which prevent them from stagnation and stench. Hinduism as a religion and the guiding force of the lives of one-eighth of the human race still remains supreme.

The great flood waters of Mohammadanism rushed through the Northern passes of India at various periods centuries ago; and swept over the whole length and breadth of the country with great force and impetuosity. For a while the placid stream of Hinduism seemed to be all but overwhelmed with each onrush of those flood waters; but soon the floods passed over, taking with them as much of the surface waters of Hinduism as they could, to collect in scattered groups in the adjoining country, leaving the mainstream of Hinduism flowing in its fertile valley, fresh, abundant, and calm as before. The great lakes and pools of Mohammadanism are scattered all over the country; but for want of fresh suppliers from the North, or any great overflow from Hinduism, they do not appear to grow bigger now. Except in the extreme north of India, where, on account of their contact with the warlike tribes they still retain something of their old fiery virility, Mohammadans everywhere else appear to have lost their superabundant vigour and vitality, and have settled down to quiet and peaceful occupations, not unlike those followed by their surrounding neighbours, the Hindus. Their ferocity having subsided, their creed of fatalism brings resignation to them, not unlike the contentment which the doctrines of renunciation and peace bring to their Hindu

brethren. Now and then, the remembrance of their bygone glory, but oftener, the appeals of designing persons to their warlike qualities, ruffle the tranquillity of the simple-minded Mohammadans; and then, unable to assign the cause of their poverty to any specific evil, they imagine Hindus to be at the root of their troubles, and try to avenge themselves by head-breaking and rioting on their imagined adversaries, at the slightest real or imaginary cause of offence. Otherwise, in the presence of so many ties that should bind together the two great communities—their common origin, similar social customs and manners, and above all, their common adversity, and the obvious need of combined endeavour to shake it off, it is difficult to understand how a little singing or music in the vicinity of their mosques, when the street noises generally cause much greater disturbance than music of the Hindu processions can possibly do, or some other frivolous excuse, should impel them to come to blows with their neighbours, which behaviour, their better sense in cooler moments must afterwards condemn. Of late years, the Hindus have also started a number of organizations to be in a state of preparedness to fight the Mohammadans, and this preparedness predisposes the Hindus to provocative aggressiveness, wherever they feel that they are in greater strength than the Mohammadans.

As I have already observed elsewhere in this book, another fruitful cause of Muslim displeasure against the Hindus, equally frivolous with the one just mentioned,

is the imagined unfavourable inequality of their community in public services and in the administration of the country. The present helpless state of Hindus and Mohammadan public servants arises from their slavish mentality, created in them by the conditions of service and their unfitness to do anything else, should they lose their jobs. It must be a highly perverted mentality of the Mohammadans, which suggests to them that public services, with their concomitants of abject dependence and helplessness, have any advantages over their independent professions. And if, by conceding to Mohammadans their foolish objective of having increased numbers of their community in public services, Hindus can remove this trivial cause of annoyance of their valuable neighbours, then they will be at once achieving the twofold advantage of shaking off their own slavish occupations and pleasing their estranged brethren.

As regards the charge of undue preponderance of Hindus in the government of their country, no sensible man can see that either the Hindus or the Mohammadans have any real share in it. It helps the ruling race to keep up the delusion of one or the other community having a larger share in the Government of the country, than they are entitled to. This feeds distrust and suspicion between the two communities, and enables the English to carry on in peace both the government of the country and its exploitation by means of their mercantile and financial systems. Much as it

would feed the vanity of the Hindus to become administrators and governors, their acquisition of high administrative positions will not give them any real advantages over the Mohammadans. Therefore, if they can win the co-operation of Muslims in their struggle for freedom, by allowing them even more than their due share in the government of the country, the Hindus will be greatly reducing their troubles, without surrendering any real advantages. It cannot be to the interest of Muslim administrators to encourage the exchange of the produce of India for toys and trinkets of foreign manufactures, or to convert food producing lands into tea, coffee, tobacco, and rubber plantations, again to exchange their produce for useless luxuries. The true interests of Indians—Hindus, Mohammadans, and all other communities with their domicile in India—are exactly identical, namely to preserve the wealth of the country within the country itself; so, if all the administrators of the country were to be from amongst the Mohammadans or even from amongst the English people, having their homes, properties, and all essential interests in India, Hindus need not fear any real harm to them arising from such a circumstance. The great objective of Hindus, Mohammadans, and all the rest, and even of Englishmen residing in India, should be to end the organized systems of the country's impoverishment by an alien government, which forces India to have extremely disadvantageous mercantile and financial dealings with foreigners; and it is only our stupidity

and ignorance of the real objective that so fatally divides us on points of petty importance.

There are two other important communities in India, the Sikhs and the Christians. Sikhism cannot be regarded otherwise than as an off-shoot or a small but forceful channel, which draws its supply from the mainstream of Hinduism; but which is clear and limpid by reason of its running through the filter of their Great Reformer, Guru Nanak's teachings. It does away with the great mass of Puranic additions to the fundamental doctrines of Hinduism; otherwise the beliefs, ways of worship, and the general outlook on spiritual matters of the two communities are very similar. Indeed, in the north of India, where Sikhism originated, and where it preponderates, a very large number of Hindus worship in Sikh temples and claim them as their own. In many families of the Hindus it is customary to make one of their sons a Sikh. The usual baits of public services and separate seats in the legislatures did, at one time, seem to draw the Sikhs into the net of communalism, and threatened to cause a schism between the Hindus and the Sikhs. But now it appears that sensible people on both sides have seen through the game, and they entertain no serious grievances on the score of there being inadequate numbers of their men in public services and in the legislatures.

Christianity in India may be likened to a few salt water lagoons, formed at different times by the high sea tides of Christianity, which over-ran the southern parts

of India, in the early days of European migration into the country. These lagoons are now neglected and are drying up for want of more high tides to feed them; and as Christianity even in Christian lands is becoming a religion of form, it is unlikely that decaying Christianity will revive her vigour in India. At any rate, it will never be a factor of great social or political importance in this country.

Before the Reforms of 1920, communal antagonism between the Hindus and the Mohammadans and clashes between them of any magnitude and seriousness were unknown. The Reforms, by creating separate electorates and seats in the legislatures for the two communities sowed the seeds of that hostility which, with short intermissions of goodwill and cordiality, has ever since characterized the relations between the two communities. The hostility engendered by separate electorates and seats in the legislatures has been studiously kept alive by the authorities, by means of partial treatment of the supposed aggrieved Mohammadan community in matters of distribution of services and promotions to and selections for higher appointments. This bias of the Indian Government in favour of Mohammadans was mentioned by Lord Oliver, the Secretary of State for India in the first Labour Government of 1924, in one of his public writings. The administration of the Punjab, which have done real pioneer work in keeping alive discord between the two communities, have, in their endeavours to favour the Muslims gone to

the length of carrying through the local legislatures some legislation, designed to harm the moneylending and other business activities of the Hindus. The Province of the Punjab is extremely favourable for the dissemination of a spirit of antagonism between the two communities, because a slight preponderance in numbers of the Mohammadan population over the Hindus give the government an excuse for bias in their favour; and the preponderance of illiteracy and ignorance in the Province easily fires up jealousies. The same inequality in the numbers of population, in favour of the Mohammadans, exists in Bengal; but general literacy and intelligence of the population much better withstand the attempts of designing persons to propagate discord between the communities. Very little good has perhaps accrued to the favoured community by official bias in their behalf, as perhaps little or no real harm has been done to the Hindus by official disfavour; but the real purpose of the official policy of favouring one community at the expense of the other, to keep up heart-burning between the ignorant elements of the communities, has been amply fulfilled.

The great blunder of the British Government in appointing a purely British Commission to enquire into the working of the Reforms of 1920, aroused the resentment and suspicions of the Mohammadan population. For a time it appeared, as though both the communities would forget all their trivial differences, and would present a united opposition to the holding of the

sham enquiry into the working of the Reforms. Black flag processions and hostile demonstrations, composed of members of both the communities, greeted the Commissioners wherever they went; and hardly any person of any political standing or importance from either of the communities, tendered evidence before the Commissioners. But the Government, by still further intensifying their campaign of openly favouring the Mohammadan community in the distribution of services and honours, were able to break up active Mohammadan opposition to the Commission of enquiry. They even managed, as a counterblast to the Congress resolutions of Independence etc. passed at the Calcutta session, to get the All India Muslim Conference held at Delhi, to pass a very comprehensive resolution, asking for the continuance of separate electorates, special seats in the legislatures, special weightage in their favour in the provinces where they are in minority, and several other safeguards and guarantees, in the proposed new constitution for India. It was remarked that most of the members of the Muslim Conference were title-holders and people courting Government favours; but even so it was a triumph of the official diplomacy to get together so many prominent Mohammadans to press for the continuance of the great evils of separate electorates, separate seats in the legislatures etc. which have so fatally divided the two communities ever since the inauguration of the first Reforms.

The propaganda of the so-called Mohammadan

leaders in favour of separate electorate and separate seats in the legislatures, helped by the bias of the Government in favour of Mohammadans in the distribution of services, has produced a strong impression among the Mohammadan population that their interests and the interests of the Hindus are really opposed to each other; that they would gain most by insisting on their separate demands and by continuing to court Government favours in the distribution of services. They do not realize that separate electorates and separate seats in the legislatures would only benefit a few place and title seekers of their community at the price of perpetuating communal discord, and that a few additional jobs for their community cannot in any way add to their wealth and importance; whereas if the movement for the economic and political liberation of the nation should fail, as a result of their falling a prey to such baits, then they as well as the Hindus would be doomed to exploitation by the mercantile systems of their rulers for a further unknown period. Apparently the Hindus, being the wealthier of the two communities, make a heavier contribution towards foreign trade and financial exploitation of India and towards the administration and defence of the country; but towards the actual production of the wealth of the country, the Mohammadans make no smaller contribution than do the Hindus proportionately to their numbers. Therefore, the economic effects of foreign exploitation on the wealth, industry, and employment of the Mohammadans

are no less injurious to them than these are to the Hindus. Indeed, Mohammadans, being the poorer community, have to depend more for their subsistence on their industry and labour than do many of the Hindus; so the foreign trade and exploitation which suppress the industry and labour of India, are, if anything, even more injurious to the Mohammadans than to the Hindus. The Hindus, by their habits of thrift, frugality, and simple living, coupled with their hereditary mercantile occupations, can generally manage to accumulate some wealth and stock; so the economic emancipation of the masses will obviously benefit the poorer community much more than the wealthier community.

These facts should have been obvious to the Mohammadan population even in the beginning of the last movement for the boycott of foreign goods. It was mainly the Hindu merchant classes who, by the loss of business and deterioration of their stocks, suffered from the boycott of foreign goods, and who might have entertained serious apprehensions of further losses by the cessation of foreign trade in future. And yet the Mohammadans continued to lend their ears to the interested and inspired propaganda that the boycott of foreign goods would bring economic ruin to their community. However, the triumph of official diplomacy and of interested propaganda of the self-constituted Mohammadan leaders against the boycott movement was by no means complete. The discerning members

of their community saw through the game, and began to join the movement for boycott of foreign goods in increasing numbers; while Mohammadans generally did not agree to be drawn into communal outbreaks.

Communal propaganda did not seriously interfere with the progress of the movement for the economic emancipation of the country, foreign trade was almost paralysed, and for once British statesmanship, although for a short time only, was forced to realize that their old tactics of setting the communities to settle their imaginary differences had failed. At the first Round Table Conference, although the British made some feeble attempts to exploit Hindu Mohammadan differences, they generally kept suppressed their own views in favour of separate electorates, etc., for fear of making the Conference even a more miserable failure than it actually was. They even went so far as to hint to the Mohammadans to accept joint electorates with reservation of seats. This withdrawal of support by the British from their favourites aroused the resentment of the Mohammadan delegates, who accused them of having forsaken their friends and allies at the critical hour. But the consequences of the breakdown of the Conference looked so alarming to the British Government and politicians that they dared not to offend the Hindus and the discerning Mohammadans by openly declaring in favour of separate electorates; so they wound up the conference by only making a vague mention of the necessity of safeguards for the minorities in any future

constitution for India.

The lukewarm support given by the British to the preposterous claims of sectarian Mohammadans at the Round Table Conference, and the action of the Government in releasing the Congress leaders and concluding a truce with Mahatmaji, so disheartened the separatist Mohammadans that, after the Gandhi-Irwin agreement, they felt that their battle was lost, and they appealed to Mahatmaji for help in settling the Hindu Muslim question. Immediately after the truce, it looked as though the Hindu Muslim question would be satisfactorily solved; and even Mahatmaji expressed his hope that shortly he would be able to secure a settlement acceptable to both Hindus and Mohammadans.

Just, however, when the hopes of a satisfactory Hindu-Muslim settlement were at the 'brightest, on account of Mahatmaji's friendly efforts and the greatly sobered down tone of the sectarian Mohammadans, as a result of the Government's cooled enthusiasm in their behalf, the unfortunate Hindu-Mohammadan riots, one of the most serious in the history of communal outbreaks in India, broke out in Cawnpore at the end of March 1931, resulting in great incendiaryism and loot and several hundred murders on both sides. The immediate cause of the outbreak was the executions of the three condemned Lahore prisoners, which led to demonstrations and hartal in Cawnpore, as in many other places in India, and resulted in a clash between those who insisted on all the people closing down their

business on account of the executions, and those who wanted to keep their shops open. But the predisposing cause was the antipathy between Congress organizations of the city and the communalist Mohammadans, called 'Aman Sabhaists' or the peace-making people of the city. Those so-called 'Aman Sabhas' were set up, generally by the loyalist sections of the population, all over the country, to counteract the work of the Congress organizations. But as those bodies were generally composed of the inferior and unpopular ranks of the population, and as their aim was generally to stir up communal discord and clashes, for which the people of both the communities were not prepared, they did not make much headway with their peace-making activities.

The objects of some of the rioters at Cawnpore appears to have been to utilize the Cawnpore riots as a signal for general conflagration in the country; but as the Government probably realized the greatly injurious effects of such riots at that stage of their negotiations with the Congress, and as the general population were convinced that such riots did not originate from any genuine grievances of the people but were engineered by interested persons, the country remained generally calm after the riots. Even the fiery speeches delivered by some speakers at the All-India Muslim Conference immediately after the riots, to stir up Muslim sentiments, by making references to the Muslim massacres at Cawnpore and their past glory, and their ability to still avenge themselves on the Hindus, failed to arouse any response

from the general body of Mohammadans in India; as all sensible and peace-loving Hindus and Mohammadans realized the paramount importance of keeping peace between the two communities, at that critical period of India's fight for her political and economic emancipation. And except for the occasional newspaper references to the riots, and the proceedings and findings of the Cawnpore riots enquiry committee, people soon forgot that any serious riots had taken place. Even the great Muslim festival of Id, which had lately been always the occasion for some serious riots between the Hindus and the Mohammadans, and which came off just after the riots, passed off perfectly peacefully. Indeed, on that occasion, the Hindus and the Mohammadans showed such goodwill and cordiality towards each other as was unknown for the past so many years.

But, although, the Cawnpore riots did not provide the peace-loving 'Aman Sabhaists' with the wished for occasion to stir up communal riots in the country, these gave the separatist Mohammadan leaders an opportunity for reviving the cry for separate electorates and special concessions to Mohammadans in the proposed constitution for India. The British and the Indian Governments also now made no secret of their predilections for separate electorates and concessions to the Mohammadans; and, after a long suppressed expression of their real feelings, the Secretary of State and the Viceroy once more reiterated their determination to insist on the safeguards and privileges desired by the minority community in any

future discussion of the Indian constitutional problem. His Excellency the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, in his parting advice to the Hindus, suggested to them to give whatever the Mohammadans desired. Had the demands of the Muslim Conference held at Delhi, represented the general concensus of Muslim opinion in India, there would have been really no difficulty for the Hindus to accept His Excellency's advice, and to give to the Mohammadans whatever they wanted. But the demands of the Delhi Conference represented no more than the demands of a handful of Muslims, who were either the paid servants of the Government, or else had hopes of gains from Governmental favours. So the people rightly treated the Delhi demands as the Government's proposals of safeguards for the minority community, expressed through the medium of their Mohammadan favourites, and refused to concede them.

The real nature of these demands was quite obvious from the very outset; but it became still more clear by the proceedings of the Nationalist Muslim's Conference held at Lucknow immediately after the Delhi Conference, with the late Maharaja of Mahmudabad and other prominent persons as the convenors, and the late Sir Ali Imam as the president. The representative character of this conference, which included delegates and prominent Muslims from all parts of India, was not contested even by the so-called All India Conference people; and, what transpired at the Conference should have served as eye-opener to those who had still some hopes left of exploiting

the supposed communal differences for their selfish ends. The president-elect traced the history of the question of electorates since 1905, and how the movement for joint electorates had gathered force since that date, when he himself was a great advocate of separate electorates. He stated that, as president-elect of the conference, he had been flooded with messages from every corner of India, and from different leaders who, one and all, insisted on the basic principle of joint electorates. He also ventured to prophesy that this movement among Indian Muslims would gather force, which no power on earth could thwart. The following brilliant passages from his presidential address after a lapse of so many years still retain their freshness and deserve to be quoted:—

“If I were asked why I have such an abiding faith in Indian nationalism, my answer is that Indian freedom is impossible without it. Separate electorates connote negation of nationalism. Political problems are but reflexes of social forces. If you erect an iron wall between community and community in their politics, you destroy the social fabric. The day-to-day life will become insupportable if you insist on building up political barriers. Nationalism can never evolve from divisions and dissensions. Consider the implications of the separatist classes in the constitution. Muslims are numerically backward. The argument is then developed, and it is asserted that they would never succeed at the polls in the face of powerful Hindu opposition. It is taken for granted that every Hindu is a potential enemy of

Musalmans. I do not believe in these generalities. But should that be assumed true, what are the logical inferences? They are, first, the Muslim is too weak to look after himself; secondly, the Hindu as an enemy is relentless; and finally the necessity is for protective clauses in the Constitution. I do not believe that such protective clauses will afford any protection, unless they have some sanction behind them. If the Muslim cannot protect himself, and the Hindu will not protect him, then the sanction must rest with a third party. Is not that a negation of nationalism? Does it not show that the separatist notion is based upon the support which cannot be found in this country? This tantamounts to perpetuation of tutelage. Is it surprising then that the Nationalist Muslim who cherishes the ideal of freedom scorns to subscribe to the embodying of a separative clause in the constitution?

"There is a school of thought that is desirous of implementing joint electorates with conditions. These have been referred to as reservations of seats, weightage etc. Here again, my personal view is that these are snares, and an examination will lead to the inevitable result of the imperative presence of some extraneous authority.

"I take liberty to impress upon you the obvious necessity of taking a straight course of insisting upon Joint electorates, undisfigured by conditions and headings. There is so much said about the share of the Indian Muslim in the concession loot. I do not believe

that the share can be fixed by statute. His share will be in proportion to the contribution he makes towards the obtaining and maintaining of India's freedom. The Muslim has nothing to fear. The stalwarts of the N. W. Frontier, and the teeming millions of Bengal, the eastern frontier, are his invaluable security in national India. In the future of India there will be no place for Hindu Raj or Muslim Raj. The sovereignty of the peoples of India will be broad based upon patriotism unalloyed by taints of communalism. This should be your goal and towards that end you should make your sacrifices."

Did the Muslim Leaguers have any counter-arguments to offer to the cogent reasoning of Sir Ali Imam against separate electorates, reservation of seats etc. for the Mohammadans, in the interests of Indian nationalism except empty threats of Civil war and abuse for those Hindu and Muslim leaders who have been selflessly trying to bring about a rapprochement between the two communities which will not involve the intervention or tutelage of the third party? Do not these people still realize that the wave of nationalism which has been sweeping over the country with such intensive force, now for several years, has not left their co-religionists unconcerned for their economic and political emancipation; and that their feeble efforts contaminated by the unholy lucre, which makes them exert their forces on behalf of the third party to perpetuate that party's tutelage, are not likely to be productive

of anything but contempt and ridicule of their own co-religionists for themselves? Do not even the clever third party realize that the time for taking cover behind supposed dissensions between the two communities has now passed away, and that any tinkering by them with the communal question, in the vain hope of arousing artificial jealousies between the communities, will lead to the further strengthening of bonds of friendship between them, to the third party's detriment, and may seriously jeopardize the chances of peace in India, which, at the present moment, is as essential to their own welfare as to India herself?

Mahatmaji, by expressing his intention not to proceed to London to discuss the constitutional problem of India, before the Hindu-Muslim differences were satisfactorily settled, appeared to give a shock to British-diplomacy, which has for its aim the wrecking of Indian Nationalism on the rock of Hindu Muslim antagonism. His masterly offer, that he would use his influence with the Hindus to make them agree to all the Muslim demands, only if they would settle among themselves what they wanted, took the wind out of those people's sails who had formerly asserted that the Congress had carried on their propaganda for the establishment of Hindu Raj. The Congress, after the Gandhi-Irwin truce, more than once declared that whatever be the collective demands of Mohammadans they would subscribe to them, if only to win Muslim co-operation and goodwill in the future government of the country;

and, with Mahatmaji's word as the pledge for the fulfilment of the Congress promise, there was no decent pretext left for anybody to further exploit the supposed differences between the Hindus and the Muslims.

But the Congress declaration and the promise of Mahatmaji were highly distasteful to the English who made unbecoming haste to put up their Mohammadan friends and instruments to raise the cry for Muslim separation, even at the risk of their mouthpieces being contemptuously treated by the rest of their own community, and the sincerity of British intentions regarding India being seriously called into question. The English could not seriously contend that even if half a dozen Mohammadans continued to insist on separate electorates and special concessions, it would be their duty, as guardians of the interests of the minority community, to guarantee separate electorates and safeguards to them. And yet their attitude at the Second Round Table Conference of giving prominence to the loyalists' resolutions of Delhi, and of ignoring the unequivocally expressed wishes of the entire Mohammadan community at Lucknow, exposed their extreme readiness to catch at any little excuse for siding with half a dozen people, to the neglect of the preponderating majority even of the favoured community.

It was the prayer of every true Indian that in the interest of future peace of India, and in the interest of the safety and stability of the British Indian connection, British politicians would give up their unreasonable and

apparently insincere attitude on the question of safeguards for the minorities, and would help rather than hinder Mahatmaji in bringing about a settlement between the two communities, on the basis of goodwill and mutual understanding and in conformity with their nationalist aspirations. But this was not to be. The Labour Government, which might have been expected to come to a reasonable understanding with the Indian leaders went out of office at the critical moment of the beginning of the second Round Table Conference. The new Government had predominating majority of conservatives in it, whose one aim was to safeguard the capitalistic and Imperialistic interests of Great Britain in India at any cost. The 'separatists' Mohammadans had already been collected at the Round Table Conference in great forces to put forth all their extravagant demands. The handful of European delegates and the self-constituted solitary champion of Indian depressed classes joined their forces with the Mohammadans; and in one big chorus of separate electorates, separate representation, and special weightages for everybody, they gave a wonderful demonstration of the inability of Indians to agree among themselves.

Of course, it was not necessary for the British Government to enquire how the nominated Mohammadan delegates became representatives of Indian Mohammadans, and how the champion of the depressed classes, whose name even nobody had heard in India, came to be a representative of the depressed classes. It

was sufficient for their purpose of demonstration that the Mohammadans and the depressed classes' leader whom they had invited to represent their respective communities, could not come to an agreement with the Hindus; and so the conference was broken up without any conclusions having been arrived at, for the simple reason that the various communities had failed to come to an agreement among themselves.

The events that have taken place after the breakdown of the second Round Table Conference are common history and need not be discussed here. The famous communal award, and later, the provisions of the India Act itself, have all been obviously dictated by the old English policy of creating antagonistic interests of different communities of India, or even of different sections of the same community, to enable them to carry on in comparative peace the political, financial, and mercantile exploitation of India, in the confusion caused by the irreconcilable interests and claims of the different factions. They have made the communal problem of India the bedrock of the Indian policy. Many previous kingdoms and dynasties have foundered on the rock of communalism. Will the British take heed of this treacherous rock, lest their ship of State, which has to all appearances emerged safely from the gales of Civil Disobedience and boycott movements, but which is still sailing aimlessly and without bearings on disturbed waters, founders on this self-same rock? The temptations to the slaves of gold to extract the last penny

advantage out of India by all possible means and devices, and to exercise their diplomacy and skill on the simple people of India, are too great to be easily subdued. But danger to the British of founding all their calculations of their Indian policy, on continuing disharmony and discord between the Hindus and the Mohammadans is also very great indeed.

It will, therefore, be no less in the interest of the stability of the British Indian connection, than of the peace, prosperity, and happiness of the warring Indian communities, if the British, after permitting the different communities of India to settle their frivolous differences, will help to forge ties of genuine and honourable friendship between India and Great Britain, such as nothing but a world convulsion may be able to split asunder.

EDUCATION

Education as a means of general enlightenment of any society has the first claim on their surplus wealth, as it is their first requirement after the primary needs of all the people of food, clothing, and lodgings have been reasonably satisfied. Nature, as she liberally rewards the labour of man for the acquisition of the primary needs of life, by giving to each man's labour several times as much as is needed by him; so has she given to each man and woman, first fifteen or sixteen years of their lives, during which time, by reason of the tenderness of their years they are not supposed to take active or considerable parts in the tasks for the acquisition of wealth; but, by reason of their sharp intellects and retentive memories, they can quickly grasp impressions and meanings of what they see, hear, or are taught. The little child of six, without practically any training, can speak his mother-tongue much better than most grown up persons can be taught to speak, and a boy or a girl, if taught with ordinary care in early childhood, will have assimilated before the age of fifteen or sixteen, all the essentials of honesty, courage, tolerance, and industry, which will guide him or her in worldly dealings and work in life.

But, whereas the general enlightenment of all boys

and girls for their proper conduct in life should be the first charge on any society who possess the ordinary necessities of life, it is not possible for any society to create great thinkers by their special attention. Learned men and great thinkers are the creation of accidents and circumstances, which no society can foresee, and for the bringing about of which they cannot take any measures. People should, therefore, primarily aim at raising their general health, morals, and intelligence by giving to all their boys and girls sound physical training and sound training in their duties towards others, and by providing for them easy and efficient instruction in their own language and in the elements of mathematics, correct reasoning, and general knowledge of the world and economy of life, and, above all, a very thorough theoretical and practical training to a greater number of boys, in agriculture—the fundamental occupation of man, and the greatest stabilising factor in the structure of human society.

Higher education, in any particular subject or subjects, should only be thought of, if the condition of wealth of the society should permit of some of their people indulging in advanced knowledge, and should only be reserved for those boys and girls who, during their ordinary courses of education, may have shown special scholarly bent of mind or abilities in some particular and useful subjects. This system of fairly advanced education for all boys and girls, but restricted scope for further higher studies to a few promising

persons, will at once raise the general physical, intellectual, and moral tone of any society, and will at the same time, prevent great waste of their energies and wealth, which would take place, if all or most of the young people, after completing their necessary courses of instruction, should go up for higher studies.

The necessary courses of instruction should be intended to fit all boys and girls for their honest wealth producing occupations and household duties respectively; whereas higher studies should be meant to provide opportunities to a very few promising persons, to enable them to become teachers and thinkers, by devoting themselves to study alone. Whereas, the ordinary and necessary courses of instruction for everyone are necessary for the life and healthy growth of any society, higher studies should be rigidly restricted to a very small number, which that society or community can easily support, for the advancement of their learning, civilization, and culture. The great body of people of any society must work to produce wealth for the society or to facilitate the production of wealth; and, only a few should be permitted or encouraged to devote themselves to embellish learning and arts of their country.

It is only from these two standards, namely whether the ordinary courses of instruction given to all boys and girls, have brought general enlightenment to the population, and have tended to fit young persons for their ordinary tasks and duties in life and their conduct and dealings with others, and whether advanced

knowledge imparted to young persons has enriched the various literatures and cultures of India, that the success or failure of the system of education established by the British rulers of India must be judged.

The necessary ordinary courses of instruction to all boys and girls have not been given and could not be given in the economic degradation of India, to which, as I have tried to explain, she has been reduced. Starvation, sickness, and disease, which pervade the whole vast continent of India, do not hearten people to attend to studies; so, if British educationists have found apathy amongst the agricultural classes to learn to read and write, they know what the cause of it is. By nature and traditions Indians are a most sensitive, receptive, intelligent, and imaginative people; it is their unfortunate poverty and dependence on others that effectively suppress their natural bent for knowledge.

The urban educated classes, or the Baboo classes as English people contemptuously call them are a peculiar creation of the British rule of India. They are mostly derived from the old accountant and clerical classes of the Moghul days, or from amongst the poor merchants who, from adverse luck in business, were compelled to seek livelihood as low paid stewards or clerks under their English merchant rulers. In order to supply for their growing business and administrative responsibilities an increasing number of low paid clerks, the English established a number of schools all over the country, as it came under their control, where instruction was given to

Indian boys in their own vernaculars, English language, and accounts. The zeal of the Christian Missionaries for religious propaganda, led to the establishment of many more similar institutions all over the country.

As was to be expected, large numbers of people who were thrown out of their customary employments, owing to the new conditions created by the extension of the British Rule in India, sent their sons or themselves flocked to these commercial training institutions, and after short courses of instruction, were employed in the various subordinate positions for which they had been prepared. The need of the merchant rulers for armies of low paid subordinate officials was the origin of the present system of education in India, which has retained to this day its principal features; and the inferior contemptible positions, which educated Indians have generally occupied in the machinery of the Government, has earned to them the title of Baboos. The present day College and University education, where some misleading instruction in history and economics is given, and a few fantastic subjects are taught to legions of young men and also to some girls, are simply the extensions of the old Baboo-making workshops. These were intended to keep down the growing demands of the Baboos for the betterment of their conditions, by prescribing for them some fantastic and difficult educational qualifications, as essential requirements for their promotions to somewhat better subordinate positions in the services, in the hope that the hardness of the

qualifying tests and the absurdity of the subjects taught, would keep away from the educational institutions many aspirants to superior subordinate services.

These educational institutions have fulfilled their intended purpose of producing cheap materials for carrying on the tasks and duties of subordinate officials in the British Indian administration; but in spite of the difficult and fantastic subjects prescribed by the clever designers of the system, as qualifying requirements for admission into Government services, there has been great over-production from these institutions, which has yielded a heavy crop of disappointed persons and seditionists, as distinct from thoughtful and patriotic Indians. Not succeeding in securing employments in spite of their having passed the hard qualifying tests, these young men either blame people of other communities for having kept them out of profitable positions by usurping an unduly large share of these themselves, or else they hold the Government responsible for their misfortunes, and turn their thoughts to the futile task of subverting the Government by violence and anarchy.

However, the one or the other of these two tendencies of the people, as a result of their failure to secure employments in the public services, are not very distasteful to the English rulers of India. The cry that the majority community are trying to kill the legitimate aspirations of the minority, or that the minority community are attempting to usurp more than their rightful shares of public services, helped by clever

pronouncements of persons in authority for the need of maintaining an accurate and exact balance in the numerical strengths of different communities in public services, and a slight inclination one way or the other, keep alive that spirit of unreasoning hostility among the communities of India, which temporarily at least, diverts their thoughts from the need of striving and straining together to end the mercantile system of their rulers, which in reality is keeping down Hindus, Mohammadans, and others in a state of degrading poverty. The little outbreaks of seditionists and anarchists give that plausible excuse to the Government for perpetrating repression on the people, which they imagine will, by its example, frighten off all forms of agitation from the country; but for the perpetration of which repression, they sometimes do not find sufficient pretext in the more dangerous but less aggressive forms of agitation, carried on by the people all over the land.

If the misguided champions of the rights of the various religious communities of India, or the more foolish anarchists knew, how little good they do to the causes which they espouse, and what great harm they were doing to the cause of their country's emancipation from poverty, most of them would surely give up their hurtful activities. The evil results of anarchists' activities are too well understood by the majority of people to deserve mention here. The advocates of the cause of more and more numbers of their community being

admitted to the services sincerely believe, and their belief is generally shared by large numbers of their community that, by securing a few more jobs for their co-religionists they will increase the employment, wealth, and importance of their particular community. They forget that the wise ancients considered service as the lowest grade of life just above the rank of beggars only; and that by agitating for more and more jobs for the people of their community, they were only trying to divert more and more people, dear to them, from respectable employments, to the grade in life nearest to the beggars. The emoluments and false elevated positions and prestige, which the superior Government servants enjoy in India at present, pertain principally to English officers, and these belong to them not as public servants, but as representatives of the ruling race, and as the instruments for the perpetuation of the autocratic system of government and hurtful foreign trade. As soon as any considerable numbers of Indians replace English officers in superior services, and as soon, moreover, as public servants become duly answerable for their actions to the representatives of the people, the halo surrounding these services will disappear, and the unseemly competition of the communities to secure them will end with it.

The efforts of the champions of the various communities to secure more and more jobs for their co-religionists as a means to enrich their particular communities are sure to be even worse rewarded than their efforts to gain importance for their communities by the same

means. Whosoever in India have noticed the half famished, harassed, and distressed looks of poor clerks and other subordinate officials, and have cared to enquire into the causes of the generally miserable plight of subordinate services, must have found out that these almost invariably lay in the poor men's low wages and ever increasing numbers of children, expenses, and responsibilities. The finances of the few highly paid Indian officials are generally even worse off than those of clerks and other subordinate officials, by reason of their generally finding it or considering it necessary, for the sake of maintaining the dignity of their high positions, to live in a style above their means. They are generally anxious to counteract the stigma of their supposed racial inferiority to their European equals in official positions; and try to do so by an awkwardly grand style of living, unbecoming for Indians subsisting on distress money of the people. Even the sensible and sober men among the superior public servants do not generally accumulate sufficient riches to outlast their own lives; so, their sons and grandsons have always to revert to the inferior services, with their attendant evils of low wages, and unhappy lives. Thus it is that, more jobs for the men of any community mean in the long run more beggarly families for that particular community. And yet the lure of services is, at the present moment, the chief bone of contention in India between the various communities, notably between the Hindus and the Mohammedans.

The ruinous consequences to its actual victims of this system of education, which is designed to manufacture low paid clerks and subordinate officials, are the least part of what the society suffers from it. The very large numbers of men which the Government employ for keeping in motion their vast, complicated, and slow machinery of administration, are straightway rendered unproductive to society. The still larger numbers who cannot get admission into services, but who, by their education, are rendered unfit for other employments, are not only a heavy charge on society for their maintenance and upkeep, but a great menace to its peace, from the many mischievous activities into which unemployed and disappointed young men, full of energy and regardless of consequences, will fall. It has rendered idle and unfit for any profitable employments a large section of the population whose forefathers had left off their proper vocations to fall into the trap of public services. Their unfitness for any profitable employments, and their utter dependence for livelihood on their success to secure jobs, has bred amongst the educated classes habits of abject submissiveness to their English superiors, and feelings of personal and racial inferiority which are fatal to the country's healthy progress.

A system of education which is incapable of forming the characters and developing the mental faculties of young people; which disables large numbers of young persons for any useful and productive work; which engenders unmeaning hostility and hate between the

various communities inhabiting the country; which lets loose disorderly youths to disturb the peace of the land; and which destroys their pride and self-respect, deserves to be shunned by all patriotic Indians. Once having entered the trap of the Indian educational system, very few people or their children live to be good citizens of their country. The strain of study of difficult and fanciful subjects, which almost always shatters the bodily constitutions of young scholars, the illusory hope of gain and fears of failure, which keep their nerves in a high state of tension, and the final consummation of the process by the scholars' securing some minor jobs, in the face of great odds and communal obstacles, generally leave the youth of India, at the end of prolonged educational struggles, physical and nervous wrecks, imbued with unreasoning hate for other communities, and serving as paid servants a system of Government which requires, as the first condition of admission into service, renunciation of all self-respect and feelings of national pride and patriotism. The continued progress of this system of education, as represented by rapid increase in numbers of schools and colleges all over India, and increasing numbers of scholars attending these educational institutions, therefore, instead of gratifying true Indians, should grieve them at the loss of so many young persons to their country.

Any true system of education must be primarily designed to develop the characters and mental powers of young persons and to form in them habits of self-help

and industry. Education can only be an accomplishment of the people or an ornament of society, but cannot be treated as a direct means of producing wealth. Education can only prosper at the expense of a wealthy society; so the first and the most essential requirement for the establishment and development of a proper educational system in India is to improve the economic condition of its people. Once the people get out of their degrading poverty, education on right lines will develop in India with very little care from the State. Just as manufactures and trade are designed to increase physical comforts and conveniences of a wealthy society, and will flourish wherever there is wealth; so education aims at the improvement of mental faculties of the people who have surplus wealth, and will flourish wherever there is surplus wealth. Mental improvement is the first need of human beings before all physical comforts and conveniences; so, education and learning flourish amongst all rightly constituted societies long before manufactures and arts make any headway amongst them.

India, one of the most ancient and a very rich country of the world, does not lack traditions of education and learning from the earliest times. Literature, philosophy, and arts have flourished in India since the most ancient times. It is not my purpose here to go back to the times of the Vedas, or to refer to the ancient schools of philosophy, or to Manu's Code of Laws, or to the highly developed science of astronomy, or even

to the highly perfected system of medicine of ancient India. Nor will I refer to the poetry and literature of the days of Ramayana or the Mohabharata, nor even to the still later period of Kalidasa. In spite of the loss and destruction of immense stores of books of learning through all these ages, the still remaining works in Sanskrit on almost all subjects which can conduce to the happiness and civilization of mankind, provide ample testimony of the fact that civilization and learning of ancient India exceeded and excelled the civilizations and learning of almost all the countries of the world, and of all succeeding ages. But, even as late as the advent of the British in India, education throughout the country was much more widespread than anywhere in Europe. Every village contained a school where reading, writing, and accounting were taught to young children; and for higher studies, there were learned men all over the country, especially in religious places and seats of learning, by personal devotion to whom, young men who wanted to devote themselves to study and sciences, could acquire great knowledge.

The British have, therefore, not conferred the blessing of education on India, as it is commonly represented. They have only destroyed the indigenous system of education of India, which had schools in every village, and which accounted for the widespread literacy in the country; and have substituted in its place a hybrid system of education with schools in a few large towns for turning out low paid clerks and other subordinates

required by them. Literacy of the country was destroyed by the rulers not by mere indifference to the old system of education, which had imparted elementary instruction to millions of children of India; but by positive starvation and discouragement of that system, by depriving that system of the means which supported it, and by not recognizing any person literate and eligible for public services who had not acquired a smattering of the English language by attending one of the hybrid schools. The Pandits and the Moulvis, who had kept out illiteracy and ignorance from the remotest corners of the country, and who used to be rewarded by the village communities and by the parents of the children whom they taught, stoutly fought against the adverse forces introduced into the village educational system of India by the British rule; but they were gradually overpowered by the superior forces. Even as late as the beginning of the twentieth century some competent teachers maintained their institutions for the instruction of children in villages and small towns successfully against the competition of Government aided schools, but they finally disappeared under the ban of non-recognition and other disabilities imposed on them by the educational authorities.

It will only be by the revival of the indigenous system of education, in some modified form to suit the present times, in which the rewards by village communities and by parents of children should form a considerable portion, if not the entire emoluments of the

teachers, that general illiteracy of the masses will be removed. Further taxation of the people, as proposed by Mr. Layton, for the purpose of establishing more schools and educational institutions in the country, although it might add a few more school houses, desks, and benches to the credit of the various educational directorates of India, will not even slightly diminish the illiteracy of the masses. In fact, further taxation of the people, by still further impoverishing them, will increase the difficulties of the masses to acquire education, and will increase the illiteracy of the country. The system of elementary education, with an elaborate organization, and with distant controlling agencies, which the educational and district authorities have tried to establish in some parts of the country, has already led to enormous waste of public funds and to great loss of time and energies of the scholars. Even on the supposition that all the teachers in the remote primary schools were efficient men and performed their duties conscientiously, the heavy costs of the organizing and controlling agencies would still remain clear waste. There is no need for elaborate and highly paid supervision of the elementary instruction of little children. But the majority of village school teachers of the present educational system, with fixed salaries and prohibitions from accepting any remunerations and rewards from the parents of children, and owing allegiance to a distant headquarters, could hardly be expected to be efficient and conscientious workers. The more conscientious or

the more cowardly among them stick to the prescribed school hours and forms of teaching, but leave the actual instruction of children to take care of itself. Teaching of young children requires the personal care of sympathetic teachers; but personal care and sympathy cannot be expected from persons who are recruited by large organizations and sent out to distant villages to teach young children with whom they have had not previous associations and sympathies, and from whom they cannot expect any reward for good teaching. If the money, which is realized by the Government from agriculturists as educational cess, remained with the villagers, and they were required with this money to employ teachers of certain minimum educational qualifications for the instruction of their children under their own care and supervision, then there could be no doubt about the majority of the young boys and girls learning to read, write and account within four or five years time. Such measures would be a great step forward in the removal of general illiteracy of the Indian masses.

The system of somewhat advanced education, called the high school education, which imparts theoretical instruction to young boys in many useful and some useless subjects, and which is confined only to a few large towns, needs thorough overhauling of its curricula of studies, and also needs wide extension to the smaller towns and larger villages. The curricula of studies for schools, whether situated in large towns or in the country, in addition to containing fairly

advanced courses of the scholars' vernacular languages and classical languages of the country, mathematics, philosophy, natural science, and general knowledge, should be preponderatingly sympathetic to the study of agricultural subjects, both theoretical and practical, and should aim at making the majority of scholars agriculturally minded, rather than aspirants for petty jobs or candidates for admission into colleges and Universities. Under the present system of education, the ambitions of almost all scholars are directed to the attainment of petty public services after passing out from schools, or to admission into one of the many overcrowded colleges and universities, with the same object of later obtaining somewhat better paid subordinate jobs in the service of the Government. The aim of improvement in the system of high school education should be to almost altogether eliminate the ambition of scholars for services, and to substitute in its place the ambition for a thorough understanding of agricultural or industrial subjects, not only as a preparation for actual agricultural or industrial occupations, but for the greater purpose of acquiring sympathy and understanding of the agricultural and industrial life and problems of the country.

Utter ignorance of agricultural and industrial subjects is now the great characteristic of scholars, even of the agricultural and industrial classes, who have any pretensions to have studied their books carefully, and to have derived civilizing influences from their studies.

Thorough knowledge and understanding, of agriculture, to the extent of actual ability and accompanied by a genuine inclination of the scholars to take to the plough after completing their high school studies, should be the aim of reforms in the system of Indian education. All the people need not necessarily take up agricultural occupations after completing their school courses, although greater the influx of educated youths into the most productive industry of the country, the better would it be for the country's prosperity. But a system of education, which aims at imparting a thorough knowledge of agriculture to its students, will sharpen their intellects and understandings, and will impart vigour and vitality to their bodies, as no other system can do; and a very short course of additional technical training will fit them for any other occupation or industry, to enable them to take up some profitable employments. The great characteristic of the products of the present system of education is their unfitness to take up any but the clerical occupations.

As to the relationship between the teachers and the scholars, it should be that of the teacher working hard to earn the greatest reward from the appreciation of the students and their parents for his good work, and of the students intent on benefiting to the utmost extent from the instructions of the teacher. If teachers could be made conscientious and hard working, the students generally would not fail to benefit to the utmost extent from the instructions of their teachers.

It is the apathetic teachers of the present educational system, with fixed though generally poor salaries, and, in consequence, general apathy to work, that foul the educational atmosphere of the country, and make the students as unwilling to receive instruction, as the teachers are generally unwilling or unable to give any, that may be of use to the students. Young students as a rule are highly inquisitive and eager to learn whatever their teachers can impart to them. It is only when they feel that their teachers attend classes only to fulfil the requirements imposed by their employers, of teaching a certain number of hours daily, that they become inattentive to their teachers' instructions. Even under very unfavourable conditions for proper education, some of the students do manage to acquire some useful knowledge of the various subjects taught to them. How great would be the benefit, which the educational institutions will impart to the country, if teachers were driven out from the sinecures of the present educational system, and their remunerations were to be paid to them, at least in part, by the parents of their students, in the shape of fees or annual rewards, upon the results of examinations to be held by some independent agency, say, the district examining boards?

As regards the question of the extension of high school education to smaller towns and larger villages, lack of funds and insufficient numbers of scholars available, are generally urged as the arguments against the

practicability of such a scheme. Of course, if education is to be kept an expensive luxury with expensive centralized control, costly buildings, heavy equipments, and fixed salaried teachers, and schools are to be kept as Baboo-making institutions, or as places of pastime and amusement for the scholars and the teachers, then both the arguments of lack of funds and of paucity of scholars will continue to hold good indefinitely. Neither are in the near future funds likely to be available for large extension of luxury schools into the countryside, nor is the apathy of the agricultural population, which constitute the greater India, for the sort of education which is imparted at the schools likely to be overcome. In fact any possible extension of the high school education to the smaller towns, which may take place by heavier taxation of the people, by curtailing the means of the agricultural population of the country, must react against attracting scholars from the countryside to those schools; so it cannot possibly help the cause of education and literacy of the country.

For schools to be really beneficial to the agricultural classes, they must be under the control of the village or town councils in which they are situated; buildings and equipments of the schools must be of the very simplest; and part at least, and a substantial part of the remunerations of teachers must come directly to them from the scholars, in order to create an interest and a strong motive in the teachers to apply themselves whole-heartedly to their task of giving education and

of attracting scholars to their institutions. Also, the type of education to be imparted at those institutions should be substantially on the lines indicated in the preceding paragraphs.

The expensive centralized control, large buildings, and needlessly heavy equipments, together with large salary bills of teachers, constitute the greatest elements of cost in the present day high school education, whereas they contribute very little to the quality or quantity of education imparted at those schools. Most generally the schools with the poorest buildings and equipments turn out the best scholars; so it is not the buildings and equipment which account for the good quality of education. The climate of India is such that education imparted in the open and amidst beautiful natural surroundings leaves much deeper impressions on the scholars' minds than abstract lectures delivered by irresponsible and generally incompetent teachers within the brick-walls of class rooms. At any rate, it should be immaterial how and where a boy received his education if he can pass the prescribed examination of an independent examining agency. Even if the type of education advocated here should result in lowering the standard of literacy side of the present day education, which result is highly improbable, it will certainly lead to the spread of real education, literacy, and agricultural and industrial knowledge among the people; and that should really be the principal object of education in any country. Schools are not meant to

turn out great intellectuals, but are the agencies for spreading general education and enlightenment; and this object can only be attained by making education cheap, widespread, and of general utility to the people.

It is not necessary to discuss the higher University education at length in this chapter except to remark that almost the entire present day university education of India is a colossal waste. College and university education must be treated differently from the high school education. Whereas, the object of all the measures in connection with the high school education should be to make it cheap and within easy reach of the poorest people of the country, all measures and regulations in connection with the University education should make it difficult rather than easy for the people to get it. Quantity should be the principal objective of the high school education, and quality of university education. Students who should have obtained distinction in their high school examinations, and very rich men's sons and daughters, for accomplishment, on payment of greatly enhanced fees, should only be eligible for admission into the Universities; so that, say, not more than one percent of the total number of students who pass out from the high school examinations should devote themselves to further studies. University education should not, moreover, be the direct means of admission into public services. Universities should primarily be the training grounds for teachers, and the best products of the Universities should make future thinkers and

learned men of the country. Except in the higher spheres, ordinary public services for the performance of set duties, which are generally assigned to public servants, do not require great learning or the best brains of the country; so University education in difficult and fantastic subjects should not be the principal, much less a necessary qualification, for admission into public services. Indeed the present overcrowding in the Universities of India, and the loss of so many young men to useful occupations and employments, are caused by the fact of the University examinations being the qualifying tests for admission into most of the public services; so, even from considerations of general public good, it is essential that University education should not carry any great advantages in the selections for public services. Universities should be venerable seats of learning, and not fields for the recruitment of public services, fruitful means of promoting communal dissensions and jealousies, and some of them, breeding grounds for terrorists and seditionists, as they are at present.

WOMEN OF INDIA

Ornament of man's existence, mother of mankind, woman has in all ages held the moving-strings of human affairs. Cynics have declaimed on the physical weakness, lack of any real beauty, and other shortcomings of women; but, there is perhaps not a normal-minded man, who has not been thrilled and conquered in his young age by some indefinable charm of a young woman, or who has not felt the need of a woman's comforting attentions after the fire of youth has subsided. Her position in the household, as the delight, comfort, and consolation of man, and as the mother of the children, who constitute man's ambitions, hopes, and motives for exertion, give woman power over man, which the decay of her physical charms cannot weaken. Indeed, even in her young days, her physical beauty does not constitute her chief power over man. It may be that woman's attractiveness is first expressed or conveyed to man through the medium of her beautiful face or form; but her unlimited power over man and her great charm for him arise from her latent heroism and willing surrender of self to him. Her latent heroism makes her do the greatest deeds of bravery and self-sacrifice in the hour of need in the cause of man, such as no one would have thought her capable of doing, with her frail

body and mild and gentle disposition. And her willing surrender of self to man, her sweet dependence on him, and recognition of him as her natural lord and protector, invest her with that power over him and give her that charm which age cannot destroy. Reduce or take away her motives of suffering in the cause of man, weaken her feelings of dependence on him, and her power over man and her charm for him will be greatly reduced or destroyed. And yet, by all the means within their power, women of the West are trying to destroy and have greatly succeeded in destroying their motives of sacrifice in his cause, and their dependence on him—their great power over man!

The greatest shock of my visit to European countries was the indifference of men towards women. This was the more so, as I had been taught to think in India that women of the West enjoy greater status in life and greater respect of men than do their slavish sisters of the East. I was dismayed to see hurrying men unceremoniously jostle past women in the crowded streets of London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna; annoyed to see them sit indifferently in their places in buses or trams, when women were standing close by for want of room; and shocked to see one cold and rainy evening in Paris, a sad looking young woman waiting for a bus being drenched in rain, while half a dozen men and women stood unconcernedly nearby, under the shelters of umbrellas. Her looks of gratitude, when in some embarrassment I stepped forward and held my umbrella over her, and

her outburst of thanks at parting affected me greatly. I felt sad the whole of that evening at the thought that a woman who could be so moved by such a trifling courtesy was surely not accustomed to receive such attentions from men. How often after that did I look on in dismay, in streets, hotels, and places of amusement, in all large cities of Europe, at the utter disregard of men for the fair sex; except when they were flirting with them or playing gallants to them.

Another feature of European life, equally painful to me with the one of indifference of men towards women, was the employment of young women in occupations which would certainly be considered immodest for them in eastern countries. The winning smiles of shop-girls and the timid attentions of young hotel maids always made me wish that these fair creatures had not been compelled by their circumstances to show such attentions to strangers; although Europeans, especially the young men, considered themselves fully entitled to their attentions and services because they had paid for the same. If I hesitated to employ them in menial occupations they thought it was showing unnecessary softness for the girls who were doing no more than what they were paid to do. Women in the western countries are great economic asset of society. As shop girls, factory hands, hotel maids, coffee vendors, actresses, dancers, and acrobats, women begin to earn their livelihood from very young years, and are a great relief to their parents and husbands. They are a great gain to society; as, by

their work, all the men are left free to engage in manufactures, commerce, and trade, which bring money into the land; and money or the vulgar enjoyments which money brings to them are what all the European peoples live for. Women's work in menial and immodest occupations tends to enhance physical pleasures and thrills and excitements of European people; but it destroys their beauty and charm for men. Free women of the West can never wield that influence and power over men which the slavish Eastern women do.

Speaking of women's power and influence in ancient China, Hu Shish declares in Chinese Renaissance:—

“Woman had always been the despot of the family. The authority of the mother and mother-in-law was very well known. Even the wife was always the terror of the husband; no other country in the world can compete with China for the distinction of being the nation of hen-pecked husbands. The wife built up her strong position sometimes upon love, sometimes upon beauty, but in most cases upon the fact that she could not be dislodged from her position; she could not be divorced.” Hindu woman was perhaps never the despot of the family or the terror of the husband; but in the well-regulated society of the Hindus, she has certainly wielded great power and influence in the family, and has been treated with the utmost courtesy and respect by man since the most ancient times.

The indifference of men for women in Europe is

greatly the outcome of women's employment in immodest occupations, and their growing love of vulgar enjoyments, such as almost naked dancing, indecent mixed bathing, and general freedom from restraint in their dealings and relations with men. A man who has often seen at a theatre or a variety show a bevy of pretty young maids, unblushingly expose to general view their almost naked forms, will hardly have any appreciation left in him for the beauty of the female sex. A man who often dances and whirls round with pretty women, under the influence of intoxicating liquors and maddening music, will hardly ever feel any thrill at the touch of a simple woman. To him as to her plain association gives no thrill and excitement, and it is principally for the sake of thrills and sensations that they live. Freedom of women brings them excitement and momentary pleasures as long as they have some physical attractions left for men; but it deprives them of their great power over men, which only their suffering and sacrifice for man and their sweet dependence on him can bring to them. All the regard of man for woman springs from that vanity which tells him that he is the lord and protector of the weaker sex, and from the innate superiority of the woman over the man, which impels her to deeds of devotion and sacrifice for him. Cease to satisfy his vanity, destroy the woman's motives of suffering and self-sacrifice; and then the man and the woman become two competing parties in the struggle for existence in which the physically weaker

is sure to be worsted.

It is this independence, this advancement of the status of Indian women from their present slavish condition, as they call it, which some even among sensible Indians have been striving to achieve for the womanhood of India during the last few years. Men and women who have been to Europe and America and have tasted of the thrills and excitements of free relations of the two sexes in those countries, but find themselves awkward and out of place in their home surroundings, are the keenest to see all restraints between men and women removed in India. Indian women who have been least under restraints of any kind, and find themselves neglected and avoided by their more reserved sisters, are the loudest in their cry for the freedom of their sex. The Presidential address and other speeches at the All Bengal Women's Congress, held some years ago, and discussions at similar other Conferences furnish striking examples of how women imbued with the ideas of independence want to render the whole female sex of their country unfit for all useful household work, independent of the love and regard of man, and fierce competitors of man for all the places of emoluments, honour, and trust. They assume that men have through all ages behaved as brutes towards women and are their avowed enemies, and try to free themselves from the clutches of men as quickly as possible.

"Man and woman have a mutual need of each other in every walk of life. But men have exploited women

far more for their own purpose than helped them in realizing their needs. Woman's feeling has never been Man's, nor woman's point of view his."

In these and similar words, the President elect of the Bengal Women's Congress described the past behaviour of men towards women. Tracing the history of the emergence of women of the West from the hypnotic sleep into which men had, according to her views, lulled the women for centuries, she said, "We are reaping the benefits of labours of women of the West, who broke through the spell and wrought a distinct change in our status after struggling for a century. Their victory over a long train of abuses, false sentiments towards men, and usurpations, has made it a comparatively walk over business for us, Indian Women, to get seats in Municipalities, Senates, and Legislatures." After describing the injustice done to Indian women by the Indian National Congress, in not assigning any special rights to women, the President laid great stress on the need of economic independence of women, and formulated the fundamental rights of women which, according to her wishes, should have been included in the new constitution for India. These rights are to include adult suffrage for women, equal partnership in husbands' income, equal right of inheritance along with sons and brothers from the father's house, and equal share with their sons from their husbands' belongings after husband's death. And the quickest means of achieving the much desired political, social, and economic

independence and rights of women, they imagine, is to westernize Indian women in their general outlook and manners of living. Abolition of the hated purdah, mixed education of grown up boys and girls, establishment of mixed Men's and ladies clubs and places of amusement, and in short, the destruction of modesty of women and reserve between the sexes by any and every means are, what they imagine, the necessary preliminary steps for the advancement of Indian women and for the progress of India. For, what country on earth ever made any progress without the advancement of their women—the mothers of coming generations, and as such, the most valuable and potent agents for influencing and moulding the future of their country?

If this view of the independence-loving women of India were to be accepted, it would be tantamount to cutting off the healthy limb of the body in the effort to heal the diseased one. In the miserable poverty of India, the one bright feature of Indian life, apart from the religious doctrines and beliefs of the people, that has so far sustained her ancient institutions and peoples, is the loving devotion and self-immolation of Indian women, which, by winning the love and respect of men has given heart and courage to them to cheerfully undergo toils for the preservation of their families and children, and has saved Indian home-life from disintegration. Nor are the secret prayers and privations of Indian women, with outward smiles, in order that their sons and husbands may get a little

more nourishment to help them in their toils, the unwilling sacrifices of slaves, but are the prayers and privations of women for those dearest to them. It is not the brutish mentality of the man, nor the slavishness of the woman, but their mutual love and suffering, that have saved Indian society from destruction, living as they do under the most unfavourable conditions for the existence of civilized human beings. In the words of Ruskin applied to the Indian home, "Woman's power is for rule, and her intellect is for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision. She is enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise—wise not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side. Wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service—the true changefulness of Woman".

To westernize Indian women, with the object of improving their status in life, would be like the adoption of spendthrifts methods of expense by the people with the object of improving the wealth of the country. The scheme of westernizing Indian women for the improvement of their status is as foolish, as the project of enriching the country by prodigal methods would be obviously absurd; although some people have advocated the need of raising the standard of living of Indians to increase the wealth of the country. Women of India enjoy such status, respect, and love in their families, and such a respectful behaviour from men

generally, as is unknown in any of the western countries; so, to westernize Indian women would be to greatly lower their real position in society. The attainment of independence by Indian women on western models can never compensate them for the loss of love and regard of those dear to them, and for the loss of respect of men generally. A treatment of the female sex, full of confidence, respect, and delicacy has always been the characteristic of Indian life, which westernization of Indian women will altogether destroy.

The President elect of the All Bengal Women's Congress, only said in general terms, without clearly explaining her meaning, that they (the Indian Women) were reaping the benefits of the labours of women of the West, who broke through the spell, and wrought a distinct change in status, after struggling for a century. She said that the victory of women of the West over the long train of abuses, false sentiments towards women, and usurpations, made it comparatively a walk over business for the Indian women to get seats in Municipalities, Senates, and Legislatures. She also assured her audience that the mutual affinity of man and woman was so great that once woman crossed the barrier of mere home utility, and showed her usefulness in the different departments of national life, there could hardly be any sex antagonism. If the attainment of the right of seats in municipalities, Senates, and Legislatures is the only result of a century's struggle for freedom of the western women, then it would be

foolish for Indian women to strive for such rights. They hold complete mastery and empire over men. And if by the victory of western women over the long train of abuses, false sentiments towards women, and usurpations is meant nothing more than the attainment of freedom by western women from all decorum and moral restraint, or the liberty to engage in immodest and indecent occupations without fear of public reproach, or the right to change their husbands as often as they find it convenient; then the longer it takes Indian women to attain such victory, the better it would be for their own happiness and for the good and happiness of the Indian society. The President's assurance regarding the mutual affinity of man and woman, if she meant no more than the mutual affinity of animals of opposite sexes, may perhaps be true to a certain extent. But if, by mutual affinity she meant that sacred fire of love, which impels man to brave the greatest perils and hardships for the sake of his beloved ones, and prompts the woman to sublime acts of suffering and sacrifice for the sake of those she holds dearest to her; then the most superficial observation of modern western home life should have shown to her that the much cherished independence of western women has all but destroyed the real affinity between man and woman. The animal affinity of man and woman, divested of the motives that bind them into a lifelong union of love and sacrifice, is very weak indeed, and snaps asunder at the first little shock or accident that impairs the physical attractions of the

one for the other.

Westernization of Indian women which, by impairing the forces which bind men and women into lasting unions, will surely lead to the disintegration of Indian home life, and should, therefore, be eschewed by all sensible persons. But this does not imply that education of the right sort in a liberal measure be denied to women, or that the customs of early marriage and purdah be not discouraged.

Westernization of Indian women does not make them educated in the right sense. It only makes them thoughtless, giddy, and ostentatious; and, as such, really unfit to receive education of the right kind, which consists in their learning modesty and reserve, and their duties as efficient household managers, loving wives, and affectionate mothers. Even in European countries, college education is not considered a necessary accomplishment for women; nor should we feel despair at the comparatively small number of girls that go up for college education in this country. Education is only meant to raise the general level of intelligence of women as of men, and to form in them habits which will be useful to them in future life. The encouragement of difficult college education, which at the expense of great physical exertion and strain will enable girls to pass examinations in fantastic subjects, will be of no real use but of much harm to women, as it is of no use and of great harm to men. College education of Indian women, therefore, does not hold the key to the progress

of India. India cannot afford to make scholars of her women, and render them useless as household managers, wives, and mothers. At the worst, lack of education among the Indian women is a fault, but not such a grievous fault as to make Indians despair of the country's progress, or to warrant the diversion of all the energies of the nation for its removal. The attempt of the statutory Commission to represent the problem of female education as being the key to the progress of India was a bluff to divert the attention of the people from the great economic and political problems of the country, to the comparatively harmless and unimportant subject of higher education of women. The following passage from the Review of the Auxiliary Committee on Education is illustrative of the false solicitude of Englishmen for the progress of India.

'The innate intelligence of the Indian woman, her feeling of domestic responsibility, her experience of household management, make her shrewd, penetrating, and wise within her own sphere. The social position of the Indian woman needs to be strengthened; for in every country, as power passes more and more from the hands of the few into the hands of the many, more and more is the steadying influence of woman needed, as the guardian of family life, nor only inside but outside the family circle. In all matters of educational and social reforms, the counsel and active work of women are essential both in administrative and in public affairs. The education of women, especially in the higher

stages, will make available to the country a wealth of capacity that is now largely wasted through lack of opportunity. It is only through education that Indian women will be able to contribute in an increasing measure to the culture, the ideals, and the activities of the country'.

The higher education of men, without any previously thought-out plan for the employment of the products of higher education, has already led to a wilderness of unemployment and disorder amongst the young men of the country; so it is absurd to think that higher education of young women will make available to the country a great wealth of capacity. At any rate, thus far, the college educated women have not, as a rule, devoted themselves to the work of social or economic uplift of their country; and have not made the benefits of their higher education felt by their parents and husbands, except by the difficulties of procuring suitable husbands for them, or by the incompatibility of their temperaments with the temperaments of their husbands, should people be found out who will marry them. The following remarks of Adam Smith on the usefulness of the simple type of female education and injuriousness of the so-called higher education even for boys of the days, when the mania of higher education had not yet extended to the women of Great Britain, and only men were victims of the malady, will furnish an interesting contrast between the honest opinion of a wise man and the superficial

and insidious observations of politicians, whose object in describing female education as being the key to India's progress could only be to direct the energies of Indians to useless pursuits.

"There are no public institutions for the education of women, and there is accordingly nothing useless, absurd, or fantastical, in the common course of their education. They are taught what their parents or guardians judge it necessary or useful for them to learn, and they are taught nothing else. Every part of their education tends evidently to some useful purpose, either to improve the natural attractions of their persons, or to form their minds to reserve, to modesty, to chastity, and to economy; to render them both likely to become the mistresses of a family, and to behave properly when they have become such. In every part of her life, a woman feels some conveniency or advantage from every part of her education. It seldom happens that a man, in any part of his life, derives any conveniency or advantage from some of the most laborious and troublesome parts of his education."

One century and a half after Adam Smith wrote these wise words, his observations regarding the uselessness of higher education for men remain quite true today. Man seldom derives any conveniency or advantage from some of the most laborious parts of his education in India, unless the attainment of some subordinate employment under the Government, by one out of a hundred educated men, be considered an

advantage of the higher education. Higher education of women in India, instead of doing any social or economic good to the country, has only raised the ambitions of young women for expensive and ostentatious living, without bringing to them the means of doing so; and by imbuing the so-called educated women with false pride and notions of superiority over their sisters who have had less schooling than themselves, has made them utterly unfit for their proper household duties. There is nothing ignoble or derogatory to the dignity of women in their performing the household duties for which they have been especially endowed by Nature, just as there is nothing ignoble in the men's performing outdoor manual labour for which they are meant.

To say that man has exploited the woman for his household utility is a gross travesty of the natural relations and duties of man and woman. There would be no household without the woman; so if she performs her household duties, she does no more than what she should do. Household duties of the woman are paramount above all others; and if there is any education needed by her, it is that she may, with the help of her education, the more efficiently, intelligently, and cheerfully perform her assigned task in life. The education which has a tendency to raise her above the performance of her household work, is as injurious to the woman, as the education which renders man unfit or unwilling to perform manual labour is injurious to him. Municipal Commissioners, senators, and legislators, are required

for the management of the affairs of a prosperous society; but for the attainment of prosperity it is first necessary that men and women should perform their respective duties of producing wealth, and of making the most economic use of wealth by proper management of the household. So, the aims and efforts of Indian women to become municipal commissioner and legislators, before first trying to improve their economic condition will not lead to real progress of the country.

Fortunately for the welfare of the country, college educated women constitute an infinitesimal minority of the female population compared to the percentage of educated men; and consequently the great majority of women are much more usefully employed than are the men. Men earn very little; but by good management, and by denying to themselves the best of what their husbands' small earnings can procure, women of India blunt the edge of their poverty, or even give to their poor homes the appearance of prosperity. What would have been stark poverty and wretchedness in any other country, is, by woman's good management, rendered happy home life in India where, after his day's toil, the husband meets with a cheerful welcome from his loving and devoted wife and happy smiles of his children.

India does not consist only of a few rich people living in large towns, that higher education and westernization of women hold the key of its social progress in the modern world. India contains three hundred and

fifty million people, to the great majority of whom the greatest problem of life is to procure two meals a day; so, the key to the progress of India does not lie in the wasteful higher education of women, but in ameliorating the poverty-stricken condition of the people. Education, and niceties of social etiquette of women, as of men, are not the cause but the effects of prosperity of any people, so the higher education of women cannot be made a condition precedent to the progress of India. It is reprehensible folly for a few westernized women of India to talk of higher education, social reforms, and political and economic rights of women, and preach a crusade against their husbands and households, at a time when their country is engaged in a life and death struggle for its political and economic emancipation, and when all the combined energies of men and women will be none too great for the achievement of these great objectives. Even if the women of India are living under some disabilities, their higher education or their unmeaning hostility to men will not better their condition or status. All their disabilities ultimately arise from the economic degradation of the country; so, if they are anxious to remove their disabilities, they must all strive with men to liberate their country from its wretched poverty. Women and men constitute two halves of the population of the country. Their interests would be best served by both acting in concert with each other, and not in opposition to each other, as separatist women's movement would obviously tend to.

The purdah and the child marriage, besides the lack of higher education among women, have been described as the shortcomings of India, and are said to have greatly impeded the Country's progress. We have seen that the lack of higher education among Indian women on western models, which has saved them from the evils of westernization, and has saved Indian home life from disintegration, is a blessing rather than a shortcoming, at any rate, in the present state of India. The purdah and the custom of early marriage are both drawbacks which need the earnest attention of Indian social reformers; but these are not such grievous faults as to warrant the suspension of all other political and economic activities by the people for the sake of their removal, or to make them despair of the Country's progress to wealth and prosperity, unless these are first removed. The country's backwardness is, as should be obvious to everyone, entirely due to the poverty of the people, caused by the impoverishing system of the Government and their ruinous trading and financial machinery. Slight social faults are neither responsible for the backwardness of the country, nor will their removal relieve it. We have seen how, at the first impetus for the removal of purdah, during the boycott and anti-liquor campaigns, it was discarded by hundreds of thousands of women all over the country; and how child marriages are becoming rarer every day with the growing consciousness among the people of the evils of the child marriage and of the necessity of bettering their

lot and the condition of their country. Indeed, the purdah and the custom of child marriage are by no means so widespread as these are represented by interested persons. There is hardly any purdah among the agricultural classes of either the Hindus or the Mohammadans in any part of India. As a rule, there is no purdah among the Hindus, except in a very mild form in Northern India. Upper classes and middle classes of Mohammadans observe purdah somewhat rigidly in the north; but even among them it is rapidly disappearing. As to child marriages, people hostile to India's political and economic aspirations, in order to vilify her, base their observations on what used to be the practice among the higher classes of Hindus and Mohammadans many years ago.

If the object of the removal of purdah be to westernize Indian women, then its existence is doing positive good to the country. Westernization of Indian women is sure to aggravate the misery of the country, not only by the harmful influence of the vicious ways of modern western life on the morals and habits of women, but also by the increased economic burdens and consequent necessity of employment of women in menial and immodest occupations, which the adoption of western ways of living implies. Expensive and immodest modes of living tend to selfishness, debauchery, and vice among men and women, and no right thinking man could wish the women of India to be the victims of these vices. It will be an evil day for India if it

became fashionable for her women to walk about with shingled hair and short skirts, or it became customary or obligatory for people of modest means to allow their young daughters and wives to expose themselves to rude stares and insulting attentions of strangers for the sake of augmenting their incomes and physical enjoyments.

CONCLUSION

From the previous discussion we have seen that India will ill fit into the schemes of the New World Order as envisaged by Englishmen, and even by some of the most prominent persons and leaders of public opinion in the country itself. Of course, Englishmen being, as they think, inextricably immersed in the Industrial system, and having tasted its fruits and profits for such a long time, will not be easily persuaded to condemn the industrial system. They will continue to think that "Wealth for the individual and the state is today derived from ability, courage, and vision, and not from getting some other man down and rifling his pockets. Today some of the richest men in the west have enriched not only themselves but the world. They have derived their wealth not from other men but by harnessing the forces of nature, and by organizing, so that production should be efficient and distribution complete. Men like Henry Ford and Lord Nuffield can look back on life, and see that their wealth has injured no man, but on the contrary their enterprises have resulted in enriching many and impoverishing none. Most of the troubles in these later years have been due to the fact that the sciences of distribution and sociology have not kept pace with the resources of production. Notion

is still widespread that wealth is the cause of poverty. This is a complete misconception. Wealth is a question of production. The distribution of wealth is another matter

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But we must not be misled by these and similar sentiments of scientifically minded persons which show a complete misunderstanding of the real problems of life and true economy of human society. That wealth is the cause of poverty and all the evils resulting from poverty, is not a widespread notion, but an established truth, which no one has yet been able to refute. Poverty springs from wealth, and crime from poverty. The truth of this doctrine was never exemplified better than by the chaotic state of the modern scientific world. America is the land of the greatest production and riches in the world today; and there the conditions of living of the common people are the hardest, and crime the most highly organized in the whole world. If the riches of Henry Ford, Lord Nuffield and other persons of great wealth be traced to their original sources—the producers of food or the workless millions whom the harnessing of the forces of nature by man has deprived of their means of subsistence—then these rich persons when they look back on life, will not have much cause for self-complacency. What those riches are, which the great money-getting persons create, must only be known to themselves or their scientist friends. But certain it is that, whereas, their activities have enriched a few persons

connected with their business enterprises, these same activities have impoverished millions of unoffending people, who may perhaps never suspect that their poverty has any connection with the riches of the Lords of Steam and Electricity.

Thus the Industrial system, except that it has blessed the people of Industrial countries, by providing them with an almost inexhaustible mine of wealth for the free play of the cupidity of generations of their men, and has incidentally created a small class of "idle rich", in their victim countries also, has not done any real good to the world. Indeed by suppressing the literatures, arts, and industries of ancient and highly civilized peoples, the votaries of the Industrial system have committed a great wrong against humanity. Their trading and financial operations have plunged millions of men of rich and fertile countries into a state of utter destitution, and have reduced almost their entire populations to the condition of underfed peasants working on overwrought soils. As a member of the South African Goodwill Mission that visited India some-time ago declared that what he had seen in India made him a greater enemy of British Imperialism than ever. "I refer", he said, "to the policy that exploits even the Englishman's patriotism for political purposes. It has drained India in order to create markets for British manufactures. It has bled white an impoverished and famished population in order to maintain in luxurious fashion an army of officers and soldiers".

But as we can see, the people of Industrial countries themselves have not really been blessed by the industrial system. They have repeatedly to pay the price of their progress with the blood of their people. None of the western countries with all the wealth and resources at their command, have been able to solve any of their major problems. Wisdom is an attribute of virtue, and if we accept Plato's dictum that 'there is such a gulf between wealth and virtue that when weighed, as it were, in the two scales of a balance, one of the two always falls as the other rises', we are constrained to the conclusion, which is fully borne out by the present chaos in the industrial world, that with the immense accumulation of spurious wealth in the western countries, virtue, and therefore wisdom are fast disappearing from their midst. Before the War, granaries of the world were bursting with corn; there was plethora of all kinds of articles of comforts, conveniences, and luxuries, and immense hoards of capital were lying idle in the coffers of nations. And yet all these accumulated riches did not contribute to the prosperity and happiness of mankind, unless we choose to treat human beings as a community of cattle, and regard the fattening of them before being sent to the slaughter house, as their prosperous and happy condition. For verily the peoples of Europe have made no better use of their powers of production than to fatten themselves up for the terrible day of slaughter that inevitably comes to demand of them sacrifices of blood at short intervals.

Modern science, is thus not the true science for the acquisition of real wealth, happiness, and contentment; and we have to go back to the wisdom of ancients for our true guidance. For them real wealth consisted in waving fields of corn, thriving flock of sheep and herds of cattle, and a variety of handicrafts and industries, to embellish their peaceful lives, and not in colossal workshops and store houses of merchandise and mischievous hoards of gold and silver. Their true happiness lay in eating the bread of labour, and not in living lives of indolence and ease. We must, therefore, reject the industrial system as utterly unsuitable to form a basis for India's place in the New World Order.

In rejecting the Industrial system, however, we must not carry any ill-will against Englishmen if we find that the one guiding motive of all their acts, whether gentle and friendly, or harsh and uncongenial, has been to drag us behind themselves into the mire of industrialism. Even in their own country they have always subordinated public good to the ruling class interest; so we must not judge of them harshly, if we find that in framing regulations for the government of India, they have always kept in the forefront what they conceive to be the interest of their country and countrymen. In all ages, worldly wise men have considered justice to consist in the stronger people safeguarding their own interests; and our English rulers have done nothing worse than to safeguard their interests which according to them consist in pushing on their unfair

trade with India and other eastern countries. With many good qualities, insatiable love of money is the course of the western people. It makes them hard hearted and dishonest in their dealings even with their own brethren, and blinds them to virtue and to their own lasting interests.

While condemning the Industrial system and the Englishman's love of money, we must not, in our enthusiasm to extricate India from the mire of industrialism, encourage mass agitation for the purpose of causing some great political upheaval in the country. As everyone knows, political upheavals always cause widespread suffering, and more often than not either result in the greater tightening of the bonds of political subjection by the old established regime, or slavery to a blood-thirsty and ruthless dictatorship emerging from the upheaval. In arousing mass consciousness without first educating the mass mind as to how best their political and economic emancipation could be achieved, there is always the danger of arousing hate and ferocity among the common people, which may lead to grievous misdirection of their energies and to the intensification and prolongation of their miseries.

Nor must we be led into preaching doctrines of socialism, communism or fascism for bringing about a quick transformation in the condition of the people. To the ordinary mind socialism or communism involves 'Abolition of religion, dissolution of the family, extermination of propertied classes and confiscation of

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property, complete suppression of individual freedom of speech, association or action, collectivization of society, and rule of the proletariat dictatorship. And this by no means exhausts the list of implications of the establishment of a socialist state in any country. Anarchy, mass massacres of innocent persons, ruffianism of persons in power, insecurity of life and instability of the state are all associated with communism or socialism. We are not dealing with an insignificant question, but with principles which concern the lives and happiness of hundreds of millions of people. In our enthusiasm therefore, for the emancipation of the oppressed we must not act rashly, lest our actions, instead of producing the beautiful state of our dreams of "economic equality and national freedom within the framework of socialist world freedom" should plunge suffering humanity into deeper misery and chaos.

Our task should be to bring home to the people of India the evils of the Industrial system. If we succeed in doing this we shall not only be putting an effective check to the economic exploitation of the country, but we shall be laying the foundation for peaceful evolution of a system of government most congenial to the state of development of the material powers of production of the people. As Marx said:—

"Men in the social production which they carry on enter into definite relations which are indispensable and independent of their wills; and these relations correspond to a definite stage in the development

of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitute the economic structure of society—the real foundation on which rise legal and political structures, and to which definite forms of social structure correspond. The method of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary their social being determines their consciousness”.

Thus in saving the people of India from the evils of the industrial system we shall be saving the country from the anarchy of socialism, communism or some form of ruthless dictatorship, that must inevitably follow in the wake of wholesale development of large scale industries in any country.

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